

WHY STUDY THE QUR'ĀN THEMATICALLY?

And We said: "O Ādam, dwell you and your wife in this Garden, and eat freely thereof, both of you, whatever you may wish; but do not approach this one tree, lest you become among the wrongdoers. But then Satan caused them to stumble therefrom, and expelled them from that wherein they were, and We said, "Get you down, each of you an enemy to the other. On the earth is your dwelling place and provisions for a while." (Q 2:35-36)

We are here on this earth because Allah Most High commanded the Father of humanity to “go down” and dwell on the earth for a while. In the above-quoted verses of Sūrat al-Baqara, the command to (“go down”) appears as a masculine plural imperative verb (أهبطوا; *ihbiṭū*), whereas at that time there were only two human beings in the Garden, Ādam and his wife. Why?

Just two verses later, the command is reiterated as *We said, "Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance—there will be no fear for them, nor will they grieve. (Q 2:38)*

The command appears two more times: (i) Q 7:24, where the same masculine plural imperative verb (*ihbiṭū*) is used; and (Q 20:123), where the verb used is اهبّطاً (*ihbiṭā*), which is a 2nd person masculine dual imperative verb.

A serious reader of the Qur'ān would naturally reflect on the Qur'ānic text and want to know the subtleties, mysteries, benefits, and secrets of Qur'ānic eloquence behind this usage. The key to answer of the primary-level questions is in the thematic links in the Qur'ān. In this particular case, the theme is human beings and a correct understanding of the above-cited verses requires a correct understanding of what Allah Most High says about us, human beings and how He has created us and for what purpose. Yet, all of these are subsets of the Creation theme of the Qur'ān, because our creation is just one of countless creations of the Creator, *al-Khāliq* and what happened in the Garden belongs to several other themes of the Qur'ān such as Divine Decree, Tribulation, Repentance and several others.

Furthermore, since “The Creator, *al-Khāliq*,” is an Attribute of Allah Most High, the creation theme itself is a subset of the theme dealing with the Attributes of Allah Most, which, in turn, is a subset of the ultimate and most primary theme of the Qur'ān: Allah.

Writing toward the end of his life, Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī (450-505/1058-1111) had shown in his *Jewels of the Qur'ān* how all concepts in the Qur'ān originate in three primary themes: Allah Most High, Prophethood, and the Return (*ma'ād*). One century later, Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Rāzī (543-606/1148-1209) used this tripartite conceptual framework to draw attention to many subtleties and eloquences of the Qur'ān.

Thematic study of the Qur'ān can, thus, yield a richer understanding. In fact, there are hundreds of verses in the Book where correct understanding of the meanings depends on a correct understanding of the theme to which they belong.

About This Class

What will be covered?

Prerequisites

Registration