

## The Illustrative Themes of the Qur'an

Another aspect of the novelty of the Qur'an language has to do with its themes. These themes and topics represent a clear departure from those which had been hitherto familiar to the Arabs. As Taha Husayn explained:

“It does not deal with any such things as ruins, camels, or long journeys in the desert; nor does it describe longing for the beloved, love, or eulogy, topics most familiar to pre-Islamic Arabs. But rather it talks to the Arabs about such things as the oneness of God, His limitless power, His knowledge, which is unattainable, His will, which is unstoppable, and His creation of heaven and earth”.

This passage underscores yet another innovative aspect of the Qur'an, namely the presentation of novel themes through an abundance of examples all aimed at illustration and persuasion. The use of illustration is one of the most effective stylistic techniques of the Qur'an. One can hardly read a verse without experiencing the impact of this technique.

The art of narrative style represents another innovative aspect of the Qur'an. It relates in astounding detail the stories of Prophet Nuh, Ibrahim, Yusuf, Musa, and Issa, among others. It presents the dialogues that took place in such stories and the claims and counter-claims made by each of the opposing parties. Story-telling may not have been totally novel in pre-Islamic Arabia given the significant quantity of parables, epics, and myths that were inherited from that period. What was novel; however, was the type of integrated, elaborate story involving such essential items as theme, plot, well-developed characters, and denouement which are to be found in the Qur'an, which refers itself to the benefit in telling such stories:

***“We do relate unto you the most beautiful stories, in that We reveal unto you this [portion of the] Qur'an. Before this you too were among those who knew it not”. (1:3)***

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