

Sura 25: Al-Furqan (The Criterion)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

Verses 1 to 20:

1. *Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all peoples.*
2. *It is He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He did not have a son, nor has He a partner in His dominion. It is He who created all things and ordered them in due measure.*
3. *Yet they have taken, besides him, gods that can create nothing but are themselves created; that have no control of hurt nor good to themselves; nor can they control death, nor life, nor resurrection.*
4. *But the disbelievers say, "This is nothing but a lie which he has fabricated, and others have helped him at it." Indeed, it is they who have committed injustice and made up a lie.*
5. *And they say, "Fables of the ancient, which he has written down, and they are dictated to him morning and evening."*
6. *Say, (to them, Muhammad), "He who knows the secret of the heavens and the earth revealed it. He is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy."*
7. *And they say, "What sort of a messenger is this, who eats food, and walks through the streets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him to give admonition with him?"*
8. *Or (why) has not a treasure thrown down to him, or why does he not have a garden from which to eat?" And the wrongdoers say, "You are following only a man who is bewitched."*
9. *See what kinds of comparisons they make for you. But they have gone astray, and they will never find a way.*
10. *Blessed is He who, if He had willed, could give you better (things) than those: gardens beneath which rivers flow; and He could give you palaces.*
11. *But they denied the Hour (of Judgment). Indeed, We have prepared a blazing Fire for those who deny the Hour.*
12. *When it sees them from a place afar, they will hear its fury and its roaring.*
13. *And when they are thrown, bound together, into a narrow place therein they will pray thereupon for destruction.*
14. *(They will be told) "This day, do not pray for a single destruction; pray for much destruction.*
15. *Say, "Is that (doom) better or the Garden of Immortality which is promised to those who remain conscious of God? It will be their reward and their final destination.*
16. *In it, they will have whatever they wish for. They will dwell (there) forever. This is a promise binding upon your Lord; and of Him to be requested."*
17. *And on the day when He will gather them and that which they worship apart from God and will say, "Was it you who misled my servants or did they (themselves) go astray from the path?"*
18. *They will say, "Glory to You, we should not have taken protecting guardians beside You. But You did bestow, on them and their fathers, good things (in life), until they forgot the message and became lost people."*

19. *Thus, they will deny you, in what you say, then you can neither avert (the doom) nor obtain help. And whoso among you does wrong, We shall make him taste great torment.*
20. *And the messengers whom We sent before you were all (men) who ate food and walked through the streets. We have made some of you as a trial for others. Will you persevere? God is All-Seeing. (25: 1-20)*

This Sura has been revealed in Mecca. One can discern two main themes for this Sura. The objective of the first theme is to comfort, reassure, and support the Messenger of God (PBUH) in delivering the Message to the stubborn, insolent and abusive idolaters of Quraish. The second theme provides a description of the fierce battle that the Messenger (PBUH) had to engage in the course of delivering the Message to the idolaters of Quraish who used all types of false arguments to stem the tide of the Message. The two themes are intertwined together and can hardly be separated from one another. However, one can also discern four sections in this Sura. The first section starts with the glorification of God. It then describes the challenges posed by the idolaters and the doom they will face on the Day of Judgment as a result of their obstinacy. The first section ends with verses to comfort the Messenger (PBUH) and to reassure him in his struggle. The second section continues to describe some of the challenges that the idolaters posed and to contrast them against the challenges posed by previous nations who went astray before them. It laments the fact that they did not learn from these examples, which puts them at the same level of brainless cattle that are unable to think. The third section takes us on a tour of the cosmos. The fourth section describes the characteristics of the servants of the Lord of Mercy and their reward.

“Blessed is He who sent down the Criterion to His servant, that it may be an admonition to all peoples.” The beginning of the Sura states its main message: The Quran is a divine revelation, the Message is a universal message, and God is One. The word “the Criterion” is used to refer to the Quran because it differentiates between the truth and falsehood and between guidance and going astray. The Quran describes a clear and unique lifestyle; and consequently, it sets a demarcation between the ways of life before and after the advent of Islam. The Quran brought a universal message that addresses all people, *“that it may be an admonition to all peoples.”*

The verse honored the Messenger (PBUH) by calling him “God’s servant.” This mode of address has been repeated in several places in the Quran; in Chapter 17, verse 1, *“Glorified be He who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the far distant Mosque;”* in Chapter 18, verse 1, *“Praise be to God who sent down the Book upon His servant;”* and Chapter 72, verse 19, *“Yet when the servant of God stood forth to invoke Him.”* This shows that being God’s servant is an honor that people should aspire to. It also indicates that human beings can never be more than God’s servants. God has no equal or partner. God is unique. He is the Creator and everyone else is His creation. The Quran has been revealed to be, *“an admonition to all peoples.”* This statement emphasizes the fact that Islam was meant to be a universal message from the start. This refutes the claim by some that the universality of the message came as a later development in the growth of Islam.

“It is He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth.” God is the owner of the heavens and earth. He has absolute control over them. He has the absolute power to plan, to manage, to control, and to change the universe. He did not have a son nor did He have a partner, *“He did not have a son, nor has He a partner in His dominion.”*

Procreation is needed to guarantee the existence of the human race, but God is eternal. Many signs in the universe affirm the Oneness of God. God created everything according to a measured order, *"It is He who created all things, and ordered them in due measure."* The idolaters were heedless of these signs. They adopted deities who were themselves created and could neither help nor harm those who worshiped them, *"Yet they have taken, besides him, gods that can create nothing but are themselves created; that have no control of hurt nor good to themselves; nor can they control death, nor life, nor resurrection."* This is in itself a major transgression against God. It is one of the ugliest sins. The Messenger (PBUH) was asked, *"What is the most heinous sin?"* He said, *"To claim that God has a partner."*

It is not surprising then that they would transgress against the Messenger (PBUH), *"But the disbelievers say, 'This is nothing but a lie which he has fabricated, and others have helped him at it.' Indeed, it is they who have committed injustice and made up a lie."* This was a major lie and what was surprising is that they knew that it was a lie. They acknowledged that the language and style of the Quran are different from the language and style that they were used to. They knew that Muhammad (PBUH) never lied or cheated before. They even used to call him, "the truthful, the trustworthy." How can the "the truthful, the trustworthy" fabricate a lie about God? But they were worried about losing their social status and religious leadership. They used these arguments to discourage the ordinary Arabs from joining the new religion. But, if the Messenger (PBUH) was able to compose such a Quran with the help of other mortals, why were the chiefs of Quraish unable to compose a similar Quran?

When the Quran narrated stories of previous nations, the chiefs of Quraish hastened to describe the Quran as, *"Fables of the ancient, which he has written down, and they are dictated to him morning and evening."* They claimed that others who knew these fables dictated them to Muhammad (PBUH), but God's answer came immediately refuting their claims, *"Say, (to them, Muhammad), 'He who knows the secret of the heavens and the earth revealed it. He is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy.'"* It was revealed by God whose knowledge is unbounded; He knows all the secrets of the heaven and earth.

"And they say, 'What sort of a messenger is this, who eats food, and walks through the streets? Why has not an angel been sent down to him to give admonition with him? Or (why) has not a treasure thrown down to him, or why does he not have a garden from which to eat?' And the wrongdoers say, 'You are following only a man who is bewitched.'" They repeat the same objections that had been voiced by the disbelievers over the centuries. How can a mortal be a messenger? They knew him; they knew his family and his history. He was a normal human being, just like any one of them; he ate like them and he walked like them. How could he be a messenger who receives a revelation from God? This may seem far-fetched; but it is also plausible. God created human beings to live on earth. God breathed into them of His spirit and gave them the responsibility of managing the earth. The knowledge and experience that human beings had were limited. Therefore, God chose messengers from among this race to help guide them to the straight path. The spirit of God which He breathed in humankind gave him a higher status among the rest of God's creation and gave him the disposition to connect to God to receive His guidance and His revelation. God has honored humankind, but the people begrudged the chosen ones from among themselves the blessings that God bestowed on them. They wondered why an angel was not sent down to help the messenger. They underestimated the value of humankind, and they underestimated the honor that God bestowed on humankind; the honor that was symbolized by God's command to the angels to prostrate themselves to Adam.

It is the divine will that messengers were chosen from among the human race. A messenger who is one of the people feels their pains, understands their feelings, appreciates their needs, and recognizes their shortcomings. Such a messenger is able to lead his people to the straight path. A messenger chosen from among the people provides a natural example. It is more convincing for people to follow an example set by one of them rather than one set by a supernatural creature like an angel.

The idolaters wondered why God would require His messenger to earn his living like anyone else? God did not want His messenger to be wealthy or to have a Garden. God wanted His messenger to be one of the people. God wanted His messenger to be a role model for his people. God wanted His Messenger to struggle patiently to bring guidance to his people and in the meantime to work hard to earn his living and support his family. Even when life became comfortable and wealth became abundant, the Messenger (PBUH) was not distracted by the wealth, and he gave it all away to help the poor and the needy.

Then they called him bewitched, *“And the wrongdoers say, ‘You are following only a man who is bewitched.’”* This type of transgression on their part was mentioned also in Chapter 17, and the Quran responded to this transgression in both places in the same way, *“See what kinds of comparisons they make for you. But they have gone astray, and they will never find a way.”* They tried to belittle the Messenger (PBUH) accusing him of being a mad man that no one should pay attention to. The flip side of this accusation is that they were convinced in their mind that the Quran is a supernatural phenomenon. The Quran simply throws that in their faces, *“they have gone astray, and they will never find a way.”*

The Quran then showed them how ridiculous their argument was and how trivial their request was, *“Blessed is He who, if He had willed, could give you better (things) than those: gardens beneath which rivers flow; and He could give you palaces.”* God is able to give His Messenger (PBUH) more than they can imagine in wealth, gardens, and palaces. God gave His Messenger (PBUH) something better and more valuable than all the material things that they suggested. God gave His Messenger (PBUH) the sweetness of being near to God and the blessing of being connected to God.

“But they denied the Hour (of Judgment). Indeed, We have prepared a blazing Fire for those who deny the Hour.” They denied the Hour reaching the limit in their disbelief. As a result, they will be tormented in the blazing Fire. The Quran paints a dynamic image, as if the blazing Fire became a living creature that sees and roars, *“When it sees them from a place afar, they will hear its fury and its roaring.”* This is a horrible scene that shakes the ground under the feet of the disbelievers and makes their hearts tremble. And when they reach it, they are thrown into it, helpless and their hands bound together, *“And when they are thrown, bound together, into a narrow place therein they will pray thereupon for destruction.”* Their agony motivates them to wish that they are dead. They pray for their own demise to escape this torment. But they will be mocked. They will be told that praying for their own demise will not be of any help even if they pray many prayers for their demise they will not be able to escape the torment, *“(They will be told) ‘This day, do not pray for a single destruction; pray for much destruction.’”*

The Quran then describes the reward for the believers, those who were conscious of their Lord and believed in the inevitability of the Hour, *“Say, ‘Is that (doom) better or the Garden of Immortality which is promised to those who remain conscious of God?’ It will be their reward and their final destination. In it, they will have whatever they wish for. They will dwell (there)*

forever. This is a promise binding upon your Lord; and of Him to be requested." The question is then posed; which end is better?

The verses continue to describe another scene of the scenes of the Day of Judgment, the scene of the idolaters when they are gathered together with their deities whom they worshipped besides God. They will all stand in front of God to be questioned, *"And on the day when He will gather them and that which they worship apart from God and will say, 'Was it you who misled my servants or did they (themselves) go astray from the path?'"* These deities may have been idols, jinn, angels, or any other deity that they worshipped beside God. God knows everything but He willed that they would be questioned in front of everyone so that they feel the gravity of their deeds. They will apologize expressing their regret for what they committed, *"They will say, 'Glory to You, we should not have taken protecting guardians beside You. But You did bestow, on them and their fathers, good things (in life), until they forgot the message and became lost people.'"* They inherited abundance of wealth and were heedless of the One who bestowed His blessings on them. Their hearts became dry and lifeless like a barren land that does not yield fruits.

The idolaters will then be told that they were deceived by their false deities, *"Thus, they will deny you, in what you say, then you can neither avert (the doom) nor obtain help. And whoso among you does wrong, We shall make him taste great torment."* They will not escape the torment, nor will they be able to get any help.

The address is now turned to the Messenger (PBUH), *"And the messengers whom We sent before you were all (men) who ate food and walked through the streets. We have made some of you as a trial for others. Will you persevere? God is All-Seeing."* God used these words to comfort His Messenger (PBUH). The idolaters did not reject the Messenger (PBUH) as a person, but they rejected God's plan. God decreed a plan to test people, *"We have made some of you as a trial for others."* Those who heed God's message will persevere when faced with afflictions. God is All-Seeing. He knows what is in the hearts and He knows the unseen.

Verses 21 to 44:

21. *And those who do not look forward for Our meeting, say, "Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?" They indeed have become too arrogant within themselves, and they have become excessively defiant.*
22. *On the day when they will see the angels, on that day there will be no good tidings for the guilty; and they shall say, "It is a forbidden thing totally prohibited."*
23. *And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did (in this life), and We shall make it a scattered dust.*
24. *The companions of the Garden will be well, that day, in their dwelling place; and they will have the fairest of places for rest.*
25. *And on the day when heaven shall be split asunder with the clouds; and the angels shall be sent down descending (in ranks).*
26. *The Sovereignty on that day will be the True (Sovereignty) belonging to the Lord of Mercy, and it will be a hard day for the disbelievers.*

27. *On the day when the wrongdoer shall bite his hands, he will say, "I wish I had chosen a way together with the messenger (of God).*
28. *Alas for me, I wish I had never taken that one for a friend.*
29. *He verily led me astray from the reminder after it had reached me. Satan was ever man's deserter in the hour of need."*
30. *Then the Messenger will say, "My Lord, My people took this Quran as a forsaken thing."*
31. *Thus, have We made for every prophet an enemy among the guilty, but God suffices as a Guide and a Helper.*
32. *And those who disbelieve say, "Why is the Quran not revealed to him all at once?" (It is revealed) so that We may strengthen your heart therewith; and We have arranged it in the right order.*
33. *And they do not bring you a similitude, but We bring you the truth, and a better argument.*
34. *Those who will be gathered on their faces to Hell; they are worse in place and further away from the right path.*
35. *We verily gave Moses the Scripture and appointed with him his brother Aaron as an assistant.*
36. *Then We said, "Go together to the folk who have denied Our revelations. Then We destroyed them utterly.*
37. *And the people of Noah, when they denied the messengers, We drowned them; We made them a sign for humankind; and We have prepared for the wrongdoers grievous torment.*
38. *And (We destroyed the tribes of) A'ad and Thamud, and the dwellers of Ar-Rass, and many generations in between.*
39. *Each (of them) We warned by examples, and each (of them) We brought to utter ruin.*
40. *And indeed, they have passed by the town which was showered with evil rain. Can it be that they have not seen it? No, but they do not expect resurrection.*
41. *And when they see you (Muhammad) they treat you only as a jest (saying), "Is this he whom God has sent as a messenger?"*
42. *He almost would have led us far away from our gods had we not persevered in worshipping them." But they will know, when they see the torment, who has strayed farther away from the path.*
43. *Have you seen him who takes his whims as his god? Will you then be a guardian over him?*
44. *Or do you think that most of them listen or understand? They are only like cattle. No, they are farther astray. (25: 21-44)*

The idolaters did not expect to meet God and they never believed it would happen. They planned their lives accordingly, and they did not prepare for such a meeting. Their questions reflected their doubts that God would send a mortal as a messenger to guide them, "*And those who do not look forward for Our meeting, say, 'Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or (why) do we not see our Lord?'*" They expressed their defiance. They declared that they would not believe unless God sent down angels, or unless they saw God. This defiance was rooted in their arrogance, "*They indeed have become too arrogant within themselves, and they have become excessively defiant.*" Who are they to dictate their conditions to God? They deserved to be ridiculed and told that God will grant their request to see the angels but this will happen on a very difficult day, "*On the day when they will see the angels, on that day there will be no good*

tidings for the guilty; and they shall say, 'It is a forbidden thing totally prohibited.'" On that day they will see what they asked for and they will wish they never asked for it because the angels will bring them torment.

"And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did (in this life), and We shall make it a scattered dust." All what they accomplished in their lives will be turned into dust that will be scattered around. Deeds are considered good deeds if they are rooted in the belief in God. These deeds connect the heart of the person with God. They are well planned and follow a consistent pattern. They are not random deeds motivated by whims and desires. Deeds which do not satisfy these conditions will be turned to dust on the Day of Judgment.

On the other hand, the believers will be resting in Paradise, *"The companions of the Garden will be well, that day, in their dwelling place; and they will have the fairest of places for rest."* They will be enjoying the tranquility, the security, and the shade in Paradise.

"And on the day when the heaven shall be split asunder with the clouds; and the angels shall be sent down descending (in ranks)." This verse and similar others suggest that major cosmic phenomena will occur on the Day of Judgment. The laws that govern the universe will cease to take effect signaling the end of the world as we know it. Some of the verses that talk about the changes that will happen are, *"When the sun is wrapped up (in darkness); and when the stars fall, dispersing; and when the mountains are removed."* (81: 1-3) *"When the sky breaks apart; and when the stars fall, scattering; and when the seas erupt."* (82:1-3) *"When the sky has split (open); and has listened to its Lord and was obligated; and when the earth has been extended and has cast out that within it and relinquished."* (84: 1-4)

All of these verses and others describe the horrendous end of our world. The earth will be shaken, the mountains will be blown up, and the seas will erupt. The stars will lose their luster, the sky will be split asunder, and the constellations will be destroyed. The sun and the moon will appear together, and the smoke will engulf the burning sky. These verses paint a fearful picture of the state of the world on the Day of Judgment. On that Day the true sovereignty will belong only to God, *"The Sovereignty on that day will be the True (Sovereignty) belonging to the Lord of Mercy, and it will be a hard day for the disbelievers."*

Those who lost their way and were misguided will regret their past behavior. They will bite their fingers in anguish, *"On the day when the wrongdoer shall bite his hands, he will say, 'I wish I had chosen a way together with the messenger (of God). Alas for me, I wish I had never taken that one for a friend. He verily led me astray from the reminder after it had reached me. Satan was ever man's deserter in the hour of need.'"* They will regret that they ever associated with those who deceived them and led them astray.

The verses then move on from the description of the events of the Day of Judgment to explore the idolaters' response to the Messenger (PBUH), *"Then the Messenger will say, 'My Lord, My people took this Quran as a forsaken thing.'"* They shunned the Quran which God revealed to His Messenger (PBUH) to warn and guide them. They did not even want to listen to it for fear of being bewitched by its beauty. They never reflected on its verses to learn the truth and find the guidance. The Quran came to outline a way of life that leads to happiness, but they never gave it a chance. The Messenger (PBUH) called upon his Lord to tell Him that he did his best, but God already knew this. God responded by comforting His Messenger (PBUH), *"Thus have We made for every prophet an enemy among the guilty, but God suffices as a Guide and a Helper."* All

other messengers of God had enemies who refused to be guided and tried their best to sway the people away from guidance, but God granted His messengers victory at the end.

It is the divine wisdom that allowed those enemies to fight the messengers and the Message because it is only through struggling with falsehood that the call to the truth will be strengthened and bloom. This struggle is the only way to discriminate between fake messages and the truth. This struggle will also discriminate between the true believers and those who join a call seeking worldly benefits.

An authentic call to the truth involves hard work and struggle against falsehood. People who undertake the responsibility to propagate these calls are required to make sacrifices and to endure persecution. Their struggle does not only strengthen their belief, but it also brings maturity to the message allowing others to see the truth and to follow the message. That is why it was necessary to have enemies who fight the messengers thus providing the opportunities to fight back and allow the battle between the truth and falsehood to take place.

“And those who disbelieve say, ‘Why is the Quran not revealed to him all at once?’ (It is revealed) so that We may strengthen your heart therewith; and We have arranged it in the right order.” The Quran was revealed to establish the Islamic project which should be followed by the Muslim nation and to outline the way of life that God wants Muslims to lead. This required the implementation of major changes to the way of life people were used to. This feat could not be achieved overnight. The elements of the Islamic project had to be delivered gradually so that the changes it requires would be implemented gradually, making the changes as natural as possible. The Quran was also revealed gradually to address real needs of the Muslim society. These needs developed over time. The Quran was not meant to be a book which would be read and enjoyed as an intellectual exercise, but it was meant to be a book that outlines a realistic way of life that should be led by people living on earth. It is for these reasons that the Quran was revealed gradually to give the people the time to understand and absorb the new changes to their way of life. The gradual revelation of the Quran gave support to the Messenger (PBUH) during his struggle with the disbelievers. The strategy which was followed in the revelation of the Quran achieved tremendous results in preparing the Muslims to adopt the way of life suggested by the Quran. The downfall of the Muslims occurred when they forgot the main objective of the Quran and started to use the Quran as a book to be read but not to be implemented.

God continued to reassure His Messenger (PBUH), *“And they do not bring you a similitude, but We bring you the truth, and a better argument.”* God will support His Messenger (PBUH). He will provide him with true evidence to refute their false arguments. He also reminded His Messenger (PBUH) of the horrible end that the disbelievers will meet. *“Those who will be gathered on their faces to Hell; they are worse in place and further away from the right path.”*

The following verses cite examples of previous nations of disbelievers and their fateful doom. It starts with Prophet Moses (PBUH), *“We verily gave Moses the Scripture and appointed with him his brother Aaron as an assistant. Then We said, ‘Go together to the folk who have denied Our revelations.’ Then We destroyed them utterly.”* Then it mentions the people of Noah (PBUH), *“And the people of Noah, when they denied the messengers, We drowned them; We made them a sign for humankind; and We have prepared for the wrongdoers a grievous torment.”* Although they only rejected Noah (PBUH), the verse indicates that they, *“denied the messengers,”* because all the messengers came with the same Message. Rejecting one messenger amounts to rejecting all messengers. The people of Noah (PBUH) were drowned in the flood which remains as a sign of God’s wrath. Similarly, *“And (We destroyed the tribes of) A’ad and Thamud, and the dwellers*

of Ar-Rass, and many generations in between. Each (of them) We warned by examples, and each (of them) We brought to utter ruin. And indeed, they have passed by the town which was showered with an evil rain. Can it be that they have not seen it? No, but they do not expect resurrection.” These are examples of the disbelieving communities over the ages. They all rejected the guidance and never believed that they will meet God and they were destroyed.

The narrative turns to the ridicule that the Messenger (PBUH) met at the hands of the idolaters. *And when they see you (Muhammad) they treat you only as a jest (saying), “Is this he whom God has sent as a messenger?”* Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was well respected by his people before being sent as a messenger of God. He came from a well-respected family and tribe, and he was known as the *“the truthful, the trustworthy.”* Quraish accepted his arbitration to settle the dispute which erupted regarding who would replace the Black Stone to its place in the Ka’ba. However, all this was forgotten once he told them that he was God’s messenger.

Their ridicule was one way to hide their feeling of insecurity. They were afraid of the consequences of believing in the Quran as can be seen clearly from this verse, *“He almost would have led us far away from our gods had we not persevered in worshipping them.”* The Quran responds by pointing out that soon they will find out who was on the straight path and who was led astray. However, it will be too late, *“But they will know, when they see the torment, who has strayed farther away from the path.”*

The Quran continued to comfort and reassure the Messenger (PBUH), *“Have you seen him who takes his whims as his god? Will you then be a guardian over him?”* He who is controlled by his low desires will not listen to the voice of reason. The Messenger (PBUH) has done his best, but what could he do with people who refuse to listen to the voice of reason. The Quran comforted the Messenger (PBUH) by telling him that it was not his shortcoming that they did not believe. They did not believe because they were unable to see the truth. They were just like animals who do not think and are unable to understand, *“Or do you think that most of them listen or understand? They are only like cattle. No, they are farther astray.”*

Verses 45 to 62:

45. *Have you not seen how your Lord has spread the shade - and if He willed He could have made it stationary; then We have made the sun its indicator.*
46. *Then We withdrew it to Us, a gradual withdrawal?*
47. *And it is He who made the night as a cover for you, and the sleep a rest; and made the day a resurrection.*
48. *And it is He who sends the winds, glad tidings heralding His mercy, and We send down purifying water from the sky,*
49. *That We may give life thereby to a dead land, and We give it as a drink, to Our numerous creatures: livestock and people.*
50. *And verily We have repeated it among them that they may become mindful, but most of humankind are ungrateful.*
51. *Had it been Our Will, We could have sent a warner to every town.*

52. *Therefore, do not listen to the disbelievers, but strive against them with it (the Quran) strenuously.*
53. *It is He who has made the two seas to flow freely. One is fresh and sweet, and the other is salty and bitter; and He placed between the two a barrier and inviolable partition.*
54. *It is He who has created humankind from water; then He established for him blood relationships and marriage relationships. Your Lord is All-Powerful.*
55. *And they worship, besides God, things that can neither profit them nor harm them; and the disbeliever is a helper (of Evil), against his own Lord.*
56. *But We only sent you to give glad tidings and admonition.*
57. *Say, "I ask no reward of you for this, except that whoso wills may take a way to his Lord."*
58. *And put your trust in Him who lives and never dies; and celebrate his praise. He suffices as the Totally Aware of the sins of His servants.*
59. *It is He who created the heavens and the earth and all that in between, in six days, and firmly established Himself on the Throne (of Authority). He is God, the Lord of Mercy. Ask you, then, about Him one who is well informed.*
60. *When it is said to them, "Prostrate to the Lord of Mercy," they say, "And what is the Lord of Mercy? Shall we prostrate to that which you command us?" And it increases their aversion (to the Truth).*
61. *Blessed is He Who made constellations in the skies, and placed therein a lamp and a moon giving light;*
62. *And it is He who made the night and the day to follow each other, for him who desires to be mindful, or desires to be thankful. (25: 45 – 62)*

"Have you not seen how your Lord has spread the shade - and if He willed He could have made it stationary; then We have made the sun its indicator. Then We withdrew it to Us, a gradual withdrawal?" The sight of the shade evokes in the soul feelings of comfort, tranquility and security. With these words, God comforted His Messenger (PBUH) to support him during his struggle against the disbelievers. God created the cosmos with certain characteristic among which the characteristics of the shade. The verse provides an invitation to reflect on the phenomenon of the formation of the shade and how it changes and how it finally disappears in the darkness. The verse alludes to the movements of the earth and the sun; which makes one think of the power of the Creator.

"And it is He who made the night as a cover for you, and the sleep a rest; and made the day a resurrection." God created the night as a cover and as time for rest. People and other creatures sleep during the night. Sleep is a sort of death. The night is followed by daylight which brings life to the world, a kind of resurrection from the death of the sleep.

"And it is He who sends the winds, glad tidings heralding His mercy, and We send down purifying water from the sky, That We may give life thereby to a dead land, and We give it as a drink, to Our numerous creatures: livestock and people." God sends the wind which brings glad tidings of rain. Water is essential for the continuation of life on earth. Some people depend directly on water for irrigation. Those people recognize God's blessings in sending these winds because their whole livelihood is dependent on rainwater. Others benefit from rivers, springs and wells which are formed and replenished by rain. The verse emphasizes the purifying function of

water, *“We send down purifying water,”* and the fact that water is the basis of life on earth, *“That We may give life thereby to a dead land.”*

The following verse takes us from the water’s role in physically cleansing life to the Quran’s role in the purification of the soul, *“And verily We have repeated it among them that they may become mindful, but most of humankind are ungrateful. Had it been Our Will, We could have sent a warner to every town. Therefore, do not listen to the disbelievers, but strive against them with it (the Quran) strenuously.”* God explained the Quran to the disbelievers in many different ways so they may heed its meaning but most of them rejected it. The task of the Messenger (PBUH) was enormous. God could have sent others to help him in this task, but the divine wisdom willed that only one person was given this undertaking. He was the seal of the prophets. His task was universal. He brought one single message to the whole world. The Messenger (PBUH) was then commanded to endure, not to listen to the disbelievers and to strive against them with the Quran.

“It is He who has made the two seas to flow freely. One is fresh and sweet, and the other is salty and bitter; and He placed between the two a barrier and inviolable partition.” God made the two seas, one fresh and the other salty, to flow freely towards each other until their waters meet however, they never mix together as if there was a physical barrier between the two. Usually, fresh water rivers flow towards salt water seas. The opposite does not normally happen. Thus, the freshness of the water river is not spoiled by the salt water from the sea. The fresh water necessary for sustaining human and animal life is protected.

The verses then move from sea and river waters to the water of life, *“It is He who has created humankind from water; then He established for him blood relationships and marriage relationships. Your Lord is All-Powerful.”* Human life springing from water is more miraculous than plant life springing from rain. A single sperm out of thousands of the male sperms unites with one female egg to begin the creation of a complicated creature. Similar eggs and sperms produce different creatures. No one knows how this is done. God is certainly All-Powerful.

Having explored the processes of creation from water coming down from the sky and water produced by the male sperm, it seems obnoxious to worship anyone but God. However, there are still people who do this, *“And they worship, besides God, things that can neither profit them nor harm them; and the disbeliever is a helper (of Evil), against his own Lord.”* The disbelievers support evil against God. They are too insignificant to wage war against God, but when they fight God’s message and messengers, they are in effect fighting God. The message to the Messenger (PBUH) is not to worry; God will take care of them. The responsibility of the Messenger (PBUH) is only to deliver the message, *“But We only sent you to give glad tidings and admonition. Say, ‘I ask no reward of you for this, except that whoso wills may take a way to his Lord.’ And put your trust in Him who lives and never dies; and celebrate his praise. He suffices as the Totally Aware of the sins of His servants.”* The Messenger (PBUH) did not expect compensation from people for his work. In doing his work, the Messenger (PBUH) was commanded to put his trust in God, the Eternal; and to celebrate His praise.

“It is He who created the heavens and the earth and all that in between, in six days, and firmly established Himself on the Throne (of Authority). He is God, the Lord of Mercy. Ask you, then, about Him one who is well informed.” This verse presents different manifestations of God’s power, the Creator. The word, “days,” mentioned in the verse refers to time periods different

from the days that we are familiar with. The earthly days are a product of the solar system which came to being after the heavens and earth were created. The days mentioned in the verse may refer to the phases that the heavens and earth went through to develop to their current form. Only God knows the true meaning of this term since He only says, "Be," and it is. The term, "*is firmly established on the Throne,*" is a reference to God's control and authority. In spite of His absolute authority and total control He is the Lord of Mercy. You can only ask one who is well informed about God and who else is more informed about God except God Himself.

The disbelievers respond to the call to worship God insolently, "*When it is said to them, 'Prostrate to the Lord of Mercy,' they say, 'And what is the Lord of Mercy? Shall we prostrate to that which you command us?' And it increases their aversion (to the Truth).*"

This is an ugly picture for a people who are insolent towards God. It is not surprising then that these people would treat the Messenger (PBUH) insolently. They claim that they do not know who the Lord of Mercy is. But they only show their aversion to the name of God, the Lord of Mercy.

The Quran responds to their query by praising and exalting God, "*Blessed is He Who made constellations in the skies and placed therein a lamp and a moon giving light; and it is He who made the night and the day to follow each other, for him who desires to be mindful, or desires to be thankful.*" The response alludes to the power of the Creator who created the constellations, the sun, and the moon. He controls the sequence of the day and the night. Without this perpetual alteration of day and night life would not have been possible on earth. These are signs for those who want to remember the blessings of God and be grateful to Him.

Verses 63 to 77:

63. *And the servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk on earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace;"*
64. *Those who spend the night before their Lord, prostrating and standing;*
65. *Those who say, "Our Lord, avert from us the torment of Hell, for its torment is indeed a grievous affliction;*
66. *Evil indeed it is as a dwelling place, and as a place to rest in."*
67. *Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between these (extremes);*
68. *Those who do not invoke with God, any other deity, nor take the life which God has made sacred except in (course of) justice, nor commit adultery; and he who does this shall pay the penalty.*
69. *On the Day of Judgment, he will receive double the torment, and he will abide therein humiliated forever;*
70. *Except for those who repent, believe, and do righteous deeds, God will change the evil of such persons into good, and God is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy.*
71. *And whosoever repents and does good he will certainly repent toward God with true repentance.*
72. *Those who do not offer false testimony, and if they pass by vain speech, they pass by it with dignity;*
73. *And those who, when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, do not fall upon them deaf and blind.*

74. *And those who say, "Our Lord, grant us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the grace) to lead the God conscious."*
75. *Those are the ones who will be rewarded with the highest place in heaven, because of their perseverance. They shall be met therein with salutations and peace,*
76. *Dwelling therein forever; how beautiful a dwelling place and a place of rest.*
77. *Say (to the disbelievers), "My Lord would not concern Himself with you but for your prayer. But now you have denied (the Truth), therefore there will be judgment." (25: 63-77)*

The following verses describe the attributes of the servants of the Lord of Mercy. These traits are the fruits of a long battle between guidance and misguidance; a battle between the messengers of God and the ungrateful disbelievers. The name "servants of the Lord of Mercy" is an honor bestowed on those who have special characteristics detailed in these verses. The verses list the traits that a person worthy of the name, "a servant of God," should have. The first trait is, *"And the servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk on earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, 'Peace.'"* The servants of God walk in an easy manner showing no pride or arrogance. It is a walk that reflects tranquility, security, and confidence. It does not show submissiveness nor weakness. They do not pay attention to vain talk and if someone spoke to them in an inappropriate way they respond by saying, "Peace."

"Those who spend the night before their Lord, prostrating and standing; those who say, 'Our Lord, avert from us the torment of Hell, for its torment is indeed a grievous affliction; evil indeed it is as a dwelling place, and as a place to rest in;'" The verse uses the two components of prayers, *"prostrating and standing,"* as a representation of the movements that the servants of God busy themselves with during the night while the people are sleeping comfortably in their beds. The servants of God spend the night in sincere prayers to their Lord, they stand to Him alone, and they prostrate themselves to Him alone. In their prayer they call upon their Lord to save them from the torment of Hellfire. They did not see Hellfire, but they read about it in the Quran and heard about from the Messenger (PBUH) and what they read and what they heard filled their hearts with fear. This fear is one of the fruits of their strong faith and belief in the truth of what they read and what they heard. They belittle their good deeds and recognize they are in desperate need of God's mercy to save them from Hellfire.

"Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between these (extremes)." This is a trait that Islam instills in both Muslim individuals and communities. It is the trait of maintaining a well-balanced life in all aspects. Islam recognizes the right of personal ownership; however, it does not allow individuals to spend their wealth freely without imposing limits. Muslims must follow a well-balanced plan when it comes to spending money. This plan is balanced between extravagance and niggardliness.

The belief in the oneness of God and abstaining from committing capital sins are among the traits of the servants of God, *"Those who do not invoke with God, any other deity, nor take the life which God has made sacred except in (course of) justice, nor commit adultery; and he who does this shall pay the penalty. On the Day of Judgment, he will receive double the torment, and he will abide therein humiliated forever;"* The belief in the Oneness of God is the cornerstone of the religion of Islam. Islam maintains the sanctity of human life, and no one is allowed to destroy a human life without a just cause. Adultery opens the door to a life full of social ills. These three

traits form a crossroad between two ways of life: a way of life that humankind, who was honored by God, deserves to live and a cheap way of life based on satisfying the carnal desires of human beings. Those who choose the latter way of life will receive their punishment. They will not only receive double torment on the Day of Judgment, but they will also be humiliated. But the door for repentance is always open, *“Except for those who repent, believe, and do righteous deeds, God will change the evil of such persons into good, and God is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy, and whosoever repents and does good he will certainly repent toward God with true repentance.”* The repentance of those who repent will be accepted, and God also promised to change their evil deeds into good deeds. This is a blessing and bounty from God that is available for those who repent and are sincere in their repentance. Sincere repentance is accomplished by fulfilling its conditions. These conditions consist of expressing regret for committing the sin, making a sincere intention not to return to the sin, and finally doing good deeds to show the serious intention of repentance.

The servants of God are those, *“who do not offer false testimony, and if they pass by vain speech, they pass by it with dignity.”* We may take the face value of the verse that they do not give a false testimony which may result in bringing harm to someone, or we may extend the verse to cover any involvement whether directly or indirectly in producing a false testament.

One of their traits is that they have open hearts and minds for receiving admonitions and also reflect and contemplate them, *“And those who, when they are reminded of the revelations of their Lord, do not fall upon them deaf and blind.”* The verse contrasts them against the disbelievers who do not think, reflect or contemplate. They simply follow what their forefathers did.

“And those who say, ‘Our Lord, grant us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the grace) to lead the God conscious.’” One of their traits is that they call upon God to provide them with good spouses and to guide their progeny to the straight path.

This passage then ends with a list of the rewards that God has kept for His servants, *“Those are the ones who will be rewarded with the highest place in heaven, because of their perseverance. They shall be met therein with salutations and peace, Dwelling therein forever; how beautiful a dwelling place and a place of rest.”* They will be given the highest place in paradise, in which they will reside forever.

“Say (to the disbelievers), ‘My Lord would not concern Himself with you but for your prayer. But now you have denied (the Truth), therefore there will be judgment.’” This whole humanity and the earth they live on are not worth more than an atom in the universe which God created and controls. They are of no concern to God. This ending is in line with the theme of the chapter in comforting the Messenger (PBUH) and belittling the efforts of the disbelievers to ridicule him.