

Piety and Wickedness



“O Mankind! Partake of what is lawful and good on earth, and follow not Satan’s footsteps: for, verily, he is your open foe and bids you only to do evil, to commit deeds of immorality, and to attribute unto God what you do not know.” (Quran 2:168-169)

God addresses all of humanity, the faithful and the faithless, to think about something we take for granted: food. God produces everything on earth: seeds, fruits, vegetables, and meats for human consumption, but forbids us relatively few things that are unwholesome. Some of the foods God has forbidden are the meat of dead animals, blood, and pork. Every food is lawful in God’s law except what He has forbidden, that has been stolen, or taken by breaking God’s law. The best foods for us are organic, natural, and wholesome – foods produced by God, but when people start altering the food chain, they produce new, unknown diseases like the mad cow disease. We need to be grateful for what God provides us.

This verse also indicates that eating enough to live is a duty imposed on human beings by God. Going to extremes in starving oneself to look beautiful, for example, is not permitted.

God also commands humanity not to follow the footsteps of Satan, meaning what Satan commands. First, Satan is real. Second, Islam tells us everything important for us to know about Satan, including how to protect ourselves. What does Satan command? Disbelief, rejecting faith in God, oppression, injustice, sins, and eating what God has forbidden. God reminds us that Satan is an enemy, so human beings should be on guard against him. God, in His mercy, did not stop at warning us from following Satan’s footsteps, but also warned against what Satan commands:

- (a) Satan commands evil. Evil includes all types of sins.
- (b) Satan commands adultery, fornication, drinking alcohol, getting drunk, and killing.

(c) The greatest command of Satan is to make us say of God what we don't know. Satan's greatest way of misguiding people is to say God has a son, an equal, to liken God to an old man sitting in heaven, to think God will punish everyone or forgive everyone without any knowledge from God Himself, or to say God permits or forbids something without any basis in knowledge from what God has revealed. As for God, He commands justice and forbids immorality and wrongdoing. **Everyone should assess what they believe in order to ensure what they are following is God's guidance rather than the promptings of Satan.**