

The collective boycotting, a ruler's prerogative

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Article taken and slightly adapted from: ferkous.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

As a rule, it is absolutely allowed to deal with the disbelievers, whether they are Dhimmis (those who are under the Muslims rule), Musta'maneen (those to whom Muslims give protection) or Muhaaribeen (those who are at war with the Muslims).

However, illicit things which are subject to dealings are excepted from that rule, like prohibited counter values; such as wine, swine flesh and dead animals, or illegal profit; such as usury benefits and things which are illicit in their selves; such as grapes intended to be wine, selling things which are illicit or rent them for a prohibited purpose.

It is also prohibited to deal with the disbelievers who are at war with Muslims as regards things which they may use to fight Muslims or establish their religion and feasts. We should not, also, sell a Mus-haf (a copy of Qur'aan) to them or a Muslim slave at all.

So, except that, it is unanimously allowed to deal with them¹. The proof is the dealings established by the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his Companions with people of Makkah before Emigration and those who used to come to it among sects of disbelievers. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ dealt, also, with the Bedouins who came to Makkah and were still polytheists. Moreover, the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, after his Emigration to Madeenah, dealt with the Jews who were in Madeenah and those who were around it and his Companions too. The Companions of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to deal with them with full knowledge and in the hearing of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. However numerous the commercial and monetary transactions and long their duration were, it was never reported that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ prohibited dealing with the disbelievers, whatever their disbelief may be; whether by obstinacy, ignorance or hypocrisy. It is rather stated in many hadeeths that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ dealt with the Jews who were in Madeenah by buying and selling, loaning, raising mortgage and other kinds of licit commercial and monetary transactions in our religion. In fact, Al-Bukhaaree named a chapter [in his Saheeh]: "*Concerning dealing, by selling and buying, with the polytheists and the disbelievers who are at war with Islaam*"².

¹ See: "Al-Majmoo`" of An-Nawawee (11/40).

² See: "Saheeh of Al-Bukhaaree" (4/410) (hadeeth 2216).

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However, the permissibility to deal with the disbelievers is not a kind of inclination (towards them) which is forbidden to us. This is ruled out by the hadeeth reported by `A'ishah رضي الله عنها who said **"That the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ bought some food from a Jew and gave him his shield of iron as a mortgage"**³. Nevertheless, we do not understand from this hadeeth that it is allowed to sell weapons to disbelievers, because a shield is not an weapon, a mortgage is not a selling and the Jew in question was among Musta'maneen and was under protection and scrutiny; so it was not to be feared that he would have an influence. As for helping the enemies of Allaah with weapons, it is aforementioned that it is unanimously forbidden. It is rather considered as a major treachery.

Thus, he who sticks to the principle that it is permissible to deal with the disbelievers, especially something that the Muslims need, his creed of Al-Walaa' Wal-Baraa' (alliance and amity, disavowal and enmity), which is one of the strongest bonds of Islaam, is not affected at all, as long as he hates polytheism, people of disbelief and does not admit or approve it, nor take disbelievers as friends, by showing affection towards them. He should not also support or praise them, nor help them against Muslims, nor imitate them as regards their own attributes, whether in religious or worldly matters, nor take them as confidants to keep his secrets and to be in charge of his most important affairs. He should not take them as judges, nor admit their rulings or let down Allaah's and his Messenger's rule. Also, he should not glorify a disbeliever by word or by action. He should not take part in the feasts of the disbelievers or congratulate them. He should not befriend them at all, whether outwardly or inwardly nor flatter them or show them sycophancy to the detriment of religion.

Those are some things that Al-Baraa' (disavowal and enmity) implies and to which a Muslim has to stick to, believe in and put into practice, by which opposition of the people of Fire is reached, and on which an independent and a self personality is built, following guidance and straight path. This is, in fact, far more important than boycotting the goods [of the disbelievers]; it is one of the prerequisites of Sha'ha'dah (There is no God worthy of worship but Allaah (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) and complements of faith. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: **"If anyone loves for Allaah's sake, hates for Allaah's sake, gives for Allaah's sake and withholds for Allaah's sake, he will have perfect faith"**⁴.

However, the ruling of boycotting goods and products of some countries of disbelief differs according to the situation of the Islaamic society; it depends on its strength and the consequences of the boycotting on it, because, as it is known, the country whose economy and industry are based on the importation of commercial and industrialised products from countries of disbelief depends on them, as it is weak. And, indeed, disbelief is of the same religion and disbelievers, when they face Muslims, are always united. So, even if some

³ Agreed upon: reported by Al-Bukhaaree (4/302) (hadeeth 2068) and by Muslim (11/40), from the hadeeth of `A'ishah رضي الله عنها.

⁴ Reported by Aboo Daawood in the chapter of "Sunnah" (hadeeth 4683) and by Ibn `Assaakir in "Taareekh Dameshq" (6/16/2, 9/396/2), from the hadeeth of Aboo Umaama رضي الله عنه. This hadeeth is authenticated by Al-Albaanee in "As-Silsilah As-Saheehah" (hadeeth 380) and in "Saheeh Al-Jaami'" (hadeeth 5965).

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countries of disbelief are boycotted, the independence to others persists, as the [Islaamic] nation is not self-sufficient, and even if these countries make concessions to those who wage boycotts, this will not benefit Islaam and Muslims, because they are humiliated and weak.

This vision of ends is estimative, but if the Muslim ruler – in taking into account the interests of Muslims and the evil that may occur – makes use of his estimation, by consulting people of good opinion and pertinence, and chooses to wage a collective boycott against any country of disbelief as an appropriate solution by which he supports Islaam and the Muslims and disgraces the disbelievers; his obedience in what he decides will be then obligatory, as his choice is relevant to the security and military affairs of the nation which are entrusted exclusively to the ruler, according to the following rule: "***The acts of the ruler depend on the interest***" because "***The status of the ruler as regards the subjects is as the status of the tutor as regards the orphan***" as Ash-Shaafi'ee رحمه الله stated it⁵.

It is on this context that we should understand the authentic hadeeths stated concerning the siege that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ made to Banu An-Nadheer, the burning of their palms and the fact that Thumaama Ibn Uthaal prevented [Makkans] from [food] and he said: "*You will never have even a wheat from Al-Yamaama until the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ allows it*"⁶. There are many other events which prove that is allowed to make Jihaad with one's money and other kinds of Jihaad. In fact, these kinds of Jihaad rest on repelling harm and procuring benefits. So, they depend on the estimation of the ruler and his leave.

According to what is stated above, we can classify the results as follows:

Firstly, as a rule, making financial and commercial dealings with the disbelievers is absolutely allowed, if that dealing is not illicit; whether it is a thing, a counter value, a benefit or a rent. It is also prohibited to help disbelievers against the Muslims or help them in what they may use to establish their religion.

Secondly, there is no matter if someone sticks to the aforesaid principle, because it does never affect the creed of Al-Walaa' Wal-Baraa' (alliance and amity and disavowal and enmity) as long as he abides by the aforementioned things that Al-Baraa' implies and on condition that he does not let buying from Muslims absolutely and preferring the disbelievers above them without a real argument.

Thirdly: there is – also – no harm for someone who boycotts individually if he intends to weaken the economy of the disbelievers and show his disavowal and displeasure with them, but on condition that no corrupted or corrupting manners will emanate from him: whether by misleading the opponent, accusing him of allegiance to enemies of Allaah جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ and

⁵ See "Al-Manthoor" of Az-Zarkashi (1/183).

⁶ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree in the chapter of "Conquests" (hadeeth 4372), by Muslim in the chapter of "Jihaad and biographies" (hadeeth 4688), by Ahmad (hadeeth 10088) and by Al-Baihaqee (hadeeth 13215), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

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cooperating with them in falsehood and spoiling money, damaging goods and products by burning and storing them, since this is a harm for the Muslim and an offense as regards his money and honour. Allaah جَلَّ جلاله said:

وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَسَادَ
[and Allaah likes not mischief]⁷

The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: "All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith: his blood, his wealth and his honour"⁸. He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said: "Verily! Your blood, property and honour are sacred to one another (i.e. Muslims) like the sanctity of this day of yours in this city of yours"⁹ he صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said: "There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm"¹⁰.

On the other hand, it is not permissible to injure the disbeliever in his blood, money or honour if he is not a fighter (against Muslims) in accordance with the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: "Allaah جَلَّ جلاله says: My servants! I have made oppression unlawful for Me and unlawful for you, so do not commit oppression against one another"¹¹. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said: "Beware, if anyone wrongs a contracting man, or diminishes his right, or forces him to work beyond his capacity, or takes from him anything without his consent, I shall plead for him on the Day of Judgment"¹². So, it is a duty to treat them with equity, and if someone of them errs, we should not hold the others responsible, in accordance with Allaah's جَلَّ جلاله saying:

وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى
[...and no bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another]¹³

He جَلَّ جلاله also said:

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ ٓأَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ

⁷ Soorah al-Baqaraah [2:205]

⁸ Reported by Muslim in the chapter of "Virtue, keeping good relations with one's kith and kin, and good manners" (hadeeth 6706), by Abou Daawood in the chapter of "Good manners" (hadeeth 4884) and by At-Tirmidhee in the chapter "Virtue and keeping good relations with one's kith and kin" (hadeeth 2052), from the hadeeth of Abou Hurayrah رضي الله عنه.

⁹ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree in the chapter of "Knowledge" (hadeeth 67), by Muslim in the chapter of "Oaths for establishing responsibility for murders" (hadeeth 4477), by Ahmad (hadeeth 2923), by Ad-Daarimee (hadeeth 1968) and by Al-Baihaqee (hadeeth 9894), from the hadeeth of Abee Bakra رضي الله عنه.

¹⁰ Reported by Ibn Maajah in the chapter of "Judgments" (hadeeth 2430), by Ahmad (hadeeth 23462) and by Al-Baihaqee (hadeeth 12224), from the hadeeth of `Ubaada Ibn As-Saamit رضي الله عنه. An-Nawawee said about the hadeeth (32) from "Al-Arba`een An-Nawawiyya": "This hadeeth has other chains of narration; each one strengthens the other"; Ibn Rajab said in "Jaami`Al-Uloom Wal-Hikam" (hadeeth 378): "It is quite as An-Nawawee said". Besides, Al-Albaanee authenticated it in "Al-Irwaa'" (hadeeth 896), in As-Silsilah As-Saheehah (hadeeth 250) and in Ghaayat Al-Maraam (hadeeth 254).

¹¹ Reported by Muslim in the chapter of "Good manners and keeping good relations with one's kith and kin" (hadeeth 6737), by Ibn Hibbaan (hadeeth 621), by Ahmad (hadeeth 20960), by Al-Baihaqee (hadeeth 11837) and by Al-Bazzaar (hadeeth 885), from the hadeeth of Abee Dharr رضي الله عنه.

¹² Reported by Abou Daawood in the chapter of "Land tax" (hadeeth 3054) and by Al-Baihaqee (hadeeth 19201), from the hadeeth of Safwaan Ibn Sulaym رضي الله عنه on the authority of many Companions رضي الله عنهم. This hadeeth is judged as Hassan (good) by Ibn Hajar in "Muwaafaqat Al-Khabar Al-Khabar" (2/184). As-Sakhaawi in "Al-Maqaassid Al-Hassana" (hadeeth 459) said: "Its chain of narration is acceptable". Al-Albaanee authenticated it in "As-Silsilah As-Saheehah" (hadeeth 1/807) and in "Mishkaat Al-Massaabeeh" (4047).

¹³ Soorah al-An'aam [6:164]

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[...and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety]¹⁴

If they have pacts with Muslims, or they owe Muslims debts, it is not permissible for a Muslim, who boycotts them, to nullify the pact between them or abstain from settling his debt. It is his duty to give them their dues in full, since Allaah ﷻ said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ
[O you who believe! Fulfil (your) obligations]¹⁵

Allaah ﷻ also said:

وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا
[And fulfil (every) covenant. Verily, the covenant, will be questioned about]¹⁶

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Return the trust to those who entrusted you, and do not betray even the one who broke his promise to you"¹⁷.

Fourthly: in case the ruler chooses to forbid dealing with a country of disbelief for the benefit of Muslims, it is a duty to obey him as regards the collective boycott, as it is stipulated in the general rules (of the Sharee'ah), and the hadeeths reported in this regard should be interpreted in this sense.

That is what we vow as religion to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds, concerning this subject. We ask Allaah ﷻ to honour His religion, to elevate His Word, to make His Prophet ﷺ and Religion triumph, to show us the truth as truth and enable us to follow it and show us the falsehood as false and enable us to avoid it. Oh Allaah! Enable this nation to stick to the belief in You, and to return to Your Religion, and to be proud of it, verily, You are Hearer, Nigh and Responsive.

Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet ﷺ, his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers 14th, Muharram 1427 H. February 13th, 2006

¹⁴ Soorah al-Maa'idah [5:8]

¹⁵ Soorah al-Maa'idah [5:1]

¹⁶ Soorah al-Israa [17:34]

¹⁷ Reported by At-Tirmidhee in the chapter of "Transactions" (hadeeth 1264), by Aboo Daawood in chapter of "Hiring" (hadeeth 3535) and by Ad-Daarimee in the chapter of "Transactions" (hadeeth 2652), from the hadeeth of Aboo Hurayrah رضي الله عنه. This hadeeth is authenticated by As-Sakhaawi in "Al-Maqaassid Al-Hassana" (hadeeth 51) and by Al-Albaanee in "As-Silsilah As-Saheehah" (hadeeth 424).