
The criterion for boycotting

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allaah the most Kind the most Merciful

Host: May Allaah bless you, Muhammad A. A, the questioner from Algeria says, ‘Noble Shaykh, I’m a Muslim who follows the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)¹, and I praise Allaah for that, but I have some friends who have some innovations, should I leave and boycott them, inform me [of an answer] and advise me, may you be rewarded [by Allaah].

Shaykh al-Uthaymeen (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ)²: It is obligatory on whoever has friends who have some innovations to advise them and clarify to them that that which they are practicing is an innovation, perchance Allaah will guide them through him and he will [thus] receive the reward of them being guided, for the Prophet (عليه الصلاة والسلام)³ said to ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib that if Allaah were to guide one man through you it would be better for you than red camels.

So if they persist in the innovations they practice—if their innovation is one which makes one a disbeliever then he must boycott them and distance himself from them, and if it is not an innovation which makes one a disbeliever then he should look to see whether there is any benefit in boycotting them: if there is benefit in boycotting them he does so and if there is no benefit in boycotting them he does not do so and that is because boycotting is a cure, if the advantage to be gained from it is hoped for then let him do it and if the advantage to be gained from it is not hoped for then let him not do it because the basis [in this issue] is that boycotting a believer is haraam and the appellation ‘Eemaan’ is not removed from the sinner amongst the believers and thus the foundation is that boycotting him is forbidden. But if there is benefit in boycotting him such that he will become upright and leave those acts which necessitate declaring him to be a Faasiq, then he is boycotted and if not then he is not boycotted.

This is the criterion regarding boycotting concerning which the proofs have come together and a summary of this criterion is that boycotting the disbelieving apostate is obligatory if

¹(صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) (sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

²(رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

³(عليه الصلاة والسلام) (Alayhi 'I-salat wa'I-Salam) Upon him prayer and peace

The criterion for boycotting

advising him does not benefit, [and] boycotting someone who is defiantly disobedient [a Faasiq] is not permissible except if there is some benefit in boycotting him and the proof for that is that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم)⁴ said that it is not allowed for anyone to boycott his believing brother such that they both meet and this one turns away from that and that one from this and [he said that] the best of them is the one who initiates the greeting of salaam, except if there is a benefit in boycotting him then he boycotts him as the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) did with Ka'b ibn Maalik and his two companions when they remained away from the Battle of Tabook.⁵

⁴ (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him and his family

⁵ Fataawaa Nurun alad-Darb.