

Boycotting American Products¹

Question: These days, we find written in some newspapers people calling others to boycott American products, not to buy or sell them. It was even written today in a newspaper that Muslim scholars themselves call for such boycotts and that doing this is an obligation upon every single Muslim. It is said that to purchase even one item from these products is forbidden and that anyone who does so commits a major sin and is assisting them and the Jews in killing Muslims. We hope you will clarify this matter since there's a dire need for such clarification. Also, would a person ever be rewarded for doing this (boycotting)?

Answer: First, I would request a copy or the clipping from this newspaper that contains this kind of talk the questioner mentioned.

Second, this is incorrect. The scholars have never issued religious verdicts saying that buying American products is forbidden. These American goods are still imported and sold in Muslim markets. And even so, it wouldn't harm America in the least if you yourself did not buy their products. No products are to be boycotted unless the government, the legitimate ruler, issues a sanction or boycott against another country. In this case, the boycott would be legitimate and binding. As for just some individuals wanting to do this and passing their own religious verdicts in support of it, then this is forbidding something that Allah has made permissible and that is not allowed.²

¹ This fatwá was taken from a book called "al-Fatāwá al-Shar'iyyah fī al-Qadhāyá al-'Asriyyah," a collection of various rulings by Muḥammad Ibn Fahd al-Ḥuṣayn.

² Taken from the cassette: "Fatāwá al-'Ulamā' fī al-Jihād wa al-'Amaliyyāt al-Intihāriyyah".