

A kind request to all Imams:

Please dedicate a khutba on the importance of standing up to oppression. With a special emphasis on checking the label on the dates we buy to ensure we don't break our fast with Israeli dates and support the oppression and occupation of the Palestinians.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

Dear respected brothers and sisters, one of the most despised acts in Islam is that of oppression, not only carrying out oppression but aiding in it also. Allah mentions in a Hadith Qudsi, *"I have forbidden oppression for myself and have made it forbidden amongst you so do not oppress one another"*. (Muslim).

With regards to aiding oppression Allah says in his glorious speech, *"and help one another to do what is right and good and do not aid one another towards sin and hostility"* (5:2).

Allah also quotes a Dua made by Musa in the Quran where he says *"My Lord! Because of the blessings you have bestowed upon me, I shall never support those who do evil"* (28:17). What's important to note in this verse here is that Musa does not promise to stay away from evil himself only, but vows rather to avoid even helping those who commit evil, in their evil.

Respected listeners, the current oppression, onslaught and murder we are witnessing in Palestine has left us heavy hearted and saddened, but more importantly it has awoken the Ummah to mobilize and do what we can to help the Palestinian cause. The question we often ask ourselves is what can we do for Palestine? What can we do to help end the ongoing oppression? One of the answers, from amongst other answers, is Boycott.

Boycott is using your power as an individual to withdraw your support from companies that help sustain Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine. It also shows that you are against Israel's actions and crimes. From among the various Boycott campaigns, in today's Khutba we are calling on all Muslims to ensure they check the label when buying dates for Ramadhan and ensure they are not produced in Israel. This would also include dates which have no origin stated on its packaging. Keep in mind these dates are grown on land stolen from our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

Boycotting allows individuals, businesses and governments worldwide to take peaceful, democratic measures against Israel for its ongoing violations of international law. It is a legitimate, peaceful way to stand up against oppression and injustice.

Remember, Boycotting is part of our History.

Thumamah ibn Uthal, the chief of Banu-Hanifa and leader of Yamamah, had killed several companions and was later apprehended. He spent three days as a prisoner in Makkah and despite his crimes was released after which Thumamah decided to accept Islam at his own free will. Thereafter he headed to Makkah (which was still under the control of the Quraysh) to perform Umrah. On witnessing the hatred and malicious plans of the Quraysh, Thumamah pledged to boycott the Makkans and withhold the sale of food/grain coming from Yamamah.

The Hadith in Sahih Bukhari states:

“By Allah, you will not get a single grain of wheat from Yamamah until it is permitted by the messenger of Allah”.

The Boycott took place and we can conclude that the prophet permitted him to use this strategy. The Boycott was only lifted when the people of Quraysh sent a letter to the prophet begging him for it to be lifted.

Boycotting is also a form of preventing evil with the hand. In a famous Hadith the messenger of Allah has said: *“Whoever from amongst you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand, if he is unable to then with his tongue and if he is unable to then let him at least feel uneasy in his heart – and this (last option) is the weakest form of Iman”.* (Muslim) Through boycotting, Allah has blessed us with an opportunity to help change an evil with our hands.

Dear respected listeners, after spending the entire day with our stomachs empty in the month of Ramadhan, let it not be that we break our fast and fill our stomachs with dates grown on stolen land. Let it not be that we are completing one act of worship while aiding the oppressor in his oppression. In the same way we purify our intentions, purify our worship, purify our wealth through zakat we must also ensure that what we consume is pure. We as Muslims have a moral duty to ensure we are not aiding the oppressor.

Respected listeners, dates grown on stolen land is considered stolen property. All the Jurists agree that buying stolen goods while knowing it is stolen is impermissible. The messenger of Allah is reported to have said, *“whoever buys stolen goods knowing that it is stolen has a share in the sin”* (Mustadrak and Ibn Abi Shaybah, the authenticity of this narration is debated).

Many individuals ask weather boycotting actually works. First of all, let us understand that regardless of the outcome, Allah rewards an individual for his efforts. When Allah holds us to task on the day of judgement it will not be for the outcome over which we have no control, it will be over our choices and actions over which we have full control.

Secondly, recently we have seen the success of the Boycott Puma campaign. Due to its operations in illegally occupied land and settlements there was a call to Boycott and Puma, due to the pressure of the Boycott, Puma announced they will stop sponsoring Israel's national football team. In 2019, dates export to the UK plummeted by 32%, knocking the UK from top export market to number 3, behind the Netherlands and France. Boycott was also an effective tool also used to bring down apartheid in South Africa.

So our message is simple. When you go to buy dates, be it for Ramadhan or otherwise, always check the label. If it is labelled as being produced or packaged in Israel, or has no origin labelled, put it back down.

Jazak Allahu Khayran