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At-Taklif [imposition of Obligation] and its Conditions

Introduction

By His grace and mercy, Allah Almighly has created mankind on the earth, and sent the prophets and messengers, to communicate them His Divine messages and *Shari'ahs* (Divine laws) to do kindness, and to organize their human life, and to delineate and show them the upright path of guidance which achieve for them felicity in this world and the Hereafter.

These Divine *Shari'ahs* have carried [conveyed] to man diverse assigned duties, like the belief in Allah, *Salat*, *Hajj*, enjoining the right deed and forbidding the wrong (indecent) deed, purification, establishment of justice among people, *Jihad*, (hard struggle for the just right), giving the *Zakat* (due–alms), and so on.

Now, we want to tell who the *Mukallaf* person is, who is responsible for obeying and observing the Divine commands and prohibitions communicated by our Prophet Muhammad (s), and what *Taklif* means. The answer is:

- 1. The *Mukallaf* is a person who is mature, sane and capable [of performing required ritual actions].
- 2. *Taklif* means that man is responsible and answerable for observing the belief in Allah, and His messengers and prophets, following our Prophet Muhammad (s), the Last of the prophets, obeying the required commands and prohibitions after possessing capability for practising them. So, by this he would be deserving either the reward or chastisement for obeying or disobeying the Divine commands and prohibitions.

Conditions of Taklif

Taklif has specific conditions required of the *Mukallaf* so as to be responsible and answerable for his deeds:

1. Puberty: The person must reach the age of puberty, so as to be considered *Mukallaf*: So no *Taklif* is assigned to the minors in the duties like, *Sawm*, *Hajj*, *Jihad*, etc. but Almighty Allah has assigned the father to being in charge of educating habituating them on observing the religious duties, and giving up or abstaining from committing sins; and calling harmful them to account, or even punishing them on doing the *Haram* and harmful deeds.

So, the minor remains responsible for some of his misbehaviours done in his minority age, after reaching the puberty, age 1, like damaging the belongings of the others. So, he has to compensate them for whatever he had damaged.

In fact, when the minor obeys the religious commands, and abstains from committing sins, his deeds will be accepted, and he will be rewarded for them, even though he is not *Mukallaf* (responsible) for performing such deeds, so long as he comprehends the meaning of his action and intention.

2. Sanity: It is another condition of *Taklif* and responsibility, so there is no *Taklif* and responsibility on the dull-witted [mentally ill], the mentally retarded, or the insane [mad] person to deal with the matters which he cannot fully comprehend or perceive.

The insane may come to his senses on certain occasions, and perceive or be aware of some binding duties. In this case he would be responsible for observing them on that occasion only. This applies also to the dull-witted or the mentally retarded man; when he perceives or fully becomes aware of them, as he would be responsible and answerable for observing them.

3. Capability: In this regard Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"Allah does not burden any soul but to the extent of its capacity."(2:286)

This holy verse (*Ayah*) manifests the justice and kindness of Almighty Allah towards His servants, as he does not burden them above their capacity or capability. So the human being is not responsible for performing any duty unless he Possesses ability or capability for doing it.

For instance, the sick person for whom fasting may do or cause harm, is exempted from it, but he has to offer a ransom for it. But if he were unable to offer it, it would be remitted from him, and he should ask for Almighty Allah's forgiveness. And the one who is incapable of performing the *Salat* in standing position, can perform it in sitting position. And so the person who has no financial or physical capabilities for performing the *Hajj*, it would not be incumbent upon him, and so on.

Sometimes it happens that man may face two binding duties, once a time, and cannot perform both of them together, he, then, has to pe1form the more important of the two. For instance, while this person is performing the *Salat* a fire flares up (erupts) near him, so then he has to undertake the more important action of the two duties. If supposedly the fire may cause a great damage, as burning people and precious things, for example, and there is nobody over there other than him to put out the fire, he has to

discontinue the Salat, and hurry up to put the fire out; otherwise he should carry on his Salat.

Signs of Bulugh (puberty)

We have already mentioned that puberty (*Bulugh*) is one of the conditions required for *Taklif*. Now we want to tell you of the signs of puberty. Puberty is fully realized when a person has attained the following signs:

- 1. Discharging or emission of the semen which is a sign of maturity and puberty.
- 2. When the male completes fifteen years of age, according to the lunar calendar, and it is a religiously favourable and commendable precaution for the young boy who has completed thirteen years of age, and entered the fourteenth, to consider himself as a *Mukallaf* or responsible. As for the female, she must complete nine lunar years of age.2
- 3. Growing of the rough pubic hair, whereas the smooth hair is not counted a feature of puberty. So, with any of these signs or specifications which are attained by the male or female person before any other features, the person will be *Mukallaf* or responsible to Almighty Allah after having possess sanity and capability.

Islam and Taklif

Not only the Muslim, but human being is charged with the assigned Divine duties. That is to say Islam is not a condition for being *Mukallaf*. Every sane human being who attains the puberty is addressed by the Islamic message, and is responsible for believing in it, and observing its precepts whether he is a Muslim or a disbeliever.

Therefore the disbeliever is also responsible for carrying out the assigned Divine duties, like the *Salat*, fasting, *Zakat*, abstaining from drinking alcoholic drinks, and the immoral conduct, etc. And he will be called to account and punished for not observing them.

So, the *Zakat* is taken from the *Kafir* (disbeliever) though he would not be rewarded for it. However, if the disbeliever has converted to Islam, he is not to redress or assigned perform what he had missed of the lapsed obligatory duties relating to the period before his conversion.

- 1. Al-Fatawal-Wadihah, Martyr As-Sadr, Vol. 1, p. 126.
- 2. Al-Fatawal-Wadihah, Martyr As-Sadr, Vol. 1, p. 129.

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