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Says the Shaykh Abu Ja'far: Our belief concerning the obligation to obey the law (*taklif*) is that Allah imposes upon His slaves (mankind) only such legal obligations as are within their power (to obey), for He says:

"Allah tasketh not a soul beyond its capacity" (Qur'an 2:286).

Now (in the Arabic idiom) *wus'* (capacity, scope) indicates a lesser degree of potentiality than *taqa* (strength). And (Imam Ja'far) as–Sadiq has said: I swear by Allah, Allah has not burdened His slaves, save to a lesser extent than their capacity.

For He has only imposed upon them five prayers during the course of a day and night; and only thirty days of fast during the year; and only five out of every two hundred dirhams (as *zakat*); and only one pilgrimage during the course of a lifetime, although the full extent of their capacity is greater.2

1. The word taklif in the sense used by the theologians is difficult to render. It is rendered "the imposition of a task" by Miller, BHA, no. 10, p.5. For a fuller expl. see nos. 131–143. Wensinck, MC, 43, translates it "the obligation of the law"; p.216; "the bondage of the law ", etc. The "sanction" of the law may also be suggested, the word sanction being used in the modern juristic sense. But this can only be used with reference to God. Ivanow translates it "religious duties", FC, no. 55; this is not very satisfactory. Probably the best is "obligation", "responsibility", Affifi, 155. Taklif is so used that God is mukallif (one who applies or enforces taklif), while man is mukallaf (one to whom taklif is applied or upon whom it is enforced). In English we would say: God enforces the rule of law; man is obliged to obey.

2. MC, 261, 265; FC, no. 55.

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