



*Bismillah-ir Rahman-ir Raheem*

[In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful]

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## **ARE WE IN COMPLIANCE WITH OUR SCRIPTURES?**

The introductory paragraph to this article is important in understanding of Muslims' compliance with Muslim scriptures. Prophet Muhammad was most successful, considering the level of civilization at that time, 1500 years ago. He constantly preached the word of God. He saw what sufferings people were put through; but nothing changed his character and he held steadfast to preach the word of God. From him we get the Holy Qur'an as the final revealed scripture and in this scripture, we get the basic principles of religious compliance. The mainstream compliance issues are practising the belief in One God, Charity, Prayer, Fasting and Pilgrimage to Mecca.

All Muslims are required to believe and actually practice believing in One God, and this basic principle of compliance is practiced throughout the world regardless of the ethnicity and governance in whichever country. This compliance comes from the basic confession on Unity of God and code of acceptance of Islam which is "*There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.*"

A Muslim person remains a Muslim as long as that person does not renounce the Faith. This aspect of compliance becomes operationally ingrained in any Muslim's life.

Charity in Islam is compulsory and comes in two parallel mainstreams. The first is called Zakat in Islam and this requires all Muslims of any standing in society to pay 1/40<sup>th</sup> of that person's income towards a charity trust administered by the Islamic community. A Muslim may donate more but not less. This aspect is compulsory; however, Muslims are not limited and may give out greater fraction as part of their charity.

The second aspect of charity is voluntary donations and no fraction has been set because of its optional involvement. Most Muslim administrations throughout the world have an inventory system so that people are committed and make their Zakat contributions within the financial year. Some people pay in lump sum and some space it out according to their affordability.

The Qur'an emphatically states (at 2:3-5): "*(Those) who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them; and who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee, and of the Hereafter they are sure. These are on a right course from their Lord, and these it is that are successful.*"

Prayer is compulsory to all Muslims whether in perfect health or in some ways physically challenged. Even people who are sick and confined to bed are not exempted from prayer. Keeping up with prayer is the most frequently repeated

injunction in Islam. It is really the first onward progress of a person and also the highest spiritual ascent when that person gets into direct one-on-one communication with the Creator. Prayer not only keeps a person away from evil but also helps that person to realise and appreciate the Divine within and links to the Creator. The Qur'an states (at 30: 17-18): *"So glory be to Allah when you enter the evening and when you enter the morning. And to Him be praise in the heavens and the earth, and in the afternoon, and when the sun declines."*

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is compulsory for all people from adolescence to adults, provided they are in reasonable physical health. The Qur'an states (at 2: 183): *"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil."* Whilst fasting has special significance to the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, it also has levelling off effect of the wider society. All those fasting are required to follow prescribed protocols of other activities which are not permitted and some other activities which supplement the occasion. These are very simple spiritual disciplines and all healthy Muslims fast and the whole month passes by in a breeze. All people who are sick or under medication and pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers are exempted from fasting: the exemption includes people in midst of long distance travelling. These people are required to resume fasting afterwards for those days they missed for exemption prescribed reasons. However, those people who are aged and very sick are totally exempted and they are required to seek redemption and to feed the poor for the periods they cannot fast.

Pilgrimage to Mecca became the turning point in Islam when Prophet Muhammad was directed to face the Ka'aba and not Jerusalem. The significance being that the Ka'aba was the first known worshipping location which was practised by Adam and Eve. Pilgrimage is obligatory on every adult, whether or not in sound health and is able to sustain the journey from a country to Mecca in Saudi Arabia and at same time provide for dependents left at home during the absence.

Prophet Muhammad's sealing off of religion can be summed up in the Holy Qur'an revelation states (at 5:3 ): ***"This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion."***

Some Prophets were raised in a background of wealth. Some were brought up in palaces. Prophet Muhammad was brought up in a background of poverty and simplicity. He understood and experienced the difficulties of poverty.

For 23 years he struggled day and night as the Ambassador, Prophet and Servant of God, to successfully carry out His mission. The Prophet's success stands victorious today with around 1.8 billion Muslims (26% of world population – CNN).

Accordingly, Muslims of all age groups and origins live in full compliance to the prescriptions in Islam and practice to the extent possible replicating the practices of Prophet Muhammad.