

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Al Hamdulillah
Ashadu Allah il ha lllaha

Submission – What Level?

By
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My today's Khutba is a mixture of lot of thoughts which cross my mind regarding Submission during the course of the day. I have tried to recollect these thoughts while sitting down to write down today's khutba.

I have realized over a period of time that in order to achieve greatness in some sport or creditability and fame in any walk of life, the most important criteria is achieving consistency in whatever one does. If you are a sportsman and if over a time you score runs or goals consistently, then you earn name, fame and can be classified amongst the greats.

The same applies to a businessman or an employed person. If you give a consistently good level of service or consistently good quality of product over a period of time, you develop brand loyalty and customers come asking for your product. The key words over here are "consistency" and "over a period of time." In fact, in the case of business, it is forever.

In order to achieve this sort of consistency, as any businessman or sportsman or any one else who is successful in his chosen field will tell you, requires a lot of hard work, being mentally alert and agile and paying strict attention to quality control plus being aware of the latest market trends. And above all this, your intentions should be clean. Because with insincerity or trying to fool the customer, you are going to get caught out sooner or later. And come to think of it, if a person is sincere in his chosen endeavors and truthful, only then will he aim for strict quality control and rigorous R & D.

So you can say these are the basic tenets or the fundamentals of achieving good results in business. Of course people might argue that a lot of other things also go in to make a successful business, like smart advertising and publicity, brilliant marketing and good PR skills. But ultimately, if your product is not upto the mark, your success in business will be short lived. As it is said "You cannot fool all the people all the time"

When I compare the consistency level of my submission with the above criteria, I realize I am falling far short of the consistency required.

After some self analysis, I have come to the conclusion that I am doing certain basic things wrong, where I feel that my submission is not as high as it should be. For a few days I feel I am at high levels of submission, but those few days are interspersed with months of low levels of submission i.e. if I compare myself to a batsman, I should say that I am averaging a half century every fifteen innings, which means I am not consistent enough.

When my submission level is high, it is a different feeling altogether. I feel very relaxed. I really feel GOD is running everything, instead of just repeating it all at the back of my mind. I feel close to GOD. I love this nice, cozy feeling of well being. I feel GOD is taking care of everything. I just have to implore GOD for something and lo behold, it is done for me. I feel quite confident when I am praying to GOD, that my prayers and implorings will be answered in the affirmative.

And if for some reason my prayers are not answered in the affirmative by GOD, I would be lying if I say I don't feel a bit disappointed, but my sense of well-being is such that I don't feel very agitated. I take it as the Will of GOD. And if He has not answered my prayers in the affirmative, then there must be some good in it for me.

To top it all I have excellent concentration in my Salat. I feel a sense of accomplishment after having prayed such a Salat. Whereas on days when my submission level is low, I am more often than not, distracted. Sometimes my concentration is so bad, I forget how many Rakats I have prayed. I really feel remorseful and guilty after I finish such a Salat.

I realize that the sort of consistency I am showing in my level of submission, if me or anyone else did the same in worldly matters, I would be an abject failure in whatever I do. I would stand no chance. I am 30 years of age now and sometimes I wonder whether it would not be better if I die before 40! Because, in spite of my best intentions of not straying from the straight and narrow path, I still fall into subtle traps laid by Satan in my path. If by any chance I die after 40, and reach the purgatory or lower heaven, it will only be due to God's infinite mercy.

Otherwise looking back on these last 30 years of my life, I am not very hopeful that I will improve. May GOD guide all of us in the right path and have mercy on us. And believe me, I am not indulging in self pity. I am using the words, "I" and "me", because I can't say for others, but I am pretty sure that except for a few, all of us are sailing in the same boat.

The certain basic things which I mentioned which I am doing wrong, which causes my submission level to go down, are some of the basic tenets mentioned in the Quran for a morally and spiritually healthy life. There are small things, small bad habits which creep into us ever so surreptitiously without our paying attention to them. It's amazing how this ignoring of small things has a parallel in the failure of many a business venture. This ignoring of fine details and small print may seem very inconsequential, but actually add up to quite a lot in the end.

In my case I have noticed that when my submission is high, I am doing these small things right, but ever so slowly. I fall into those very subtle traps and provocation's and situations which Satan lays in my path, and then again I am back to square one. If a human being is strong as a submitter and a believer, then Satan will bang his head against a brick wall. Of course its another matter that he won't stop trying.

The first and most important thing which I feel I do wrong, which causes my submission level to drop is backbiting. I backbite at the drop of a hat!

Our Merciful God in 49:12 has mentioned that suspicion is sinful: *"O you who believe, you shall avoid any suspicion, for even a little bit of suspicion is sinful. You shall not spy on one another, nor shall you backbite one another; this is as abominable as eating the flesh of your dead brother. You certainly abhor this. You shall observe GOD. GOD is Redeemer, Most Merciful."* And God has named Sura 104 as 'Al Humazah' i.e. the Backbiter, and the 1st sentence is, *"Woe to every backbiter, slanderer."* Come to think of it, backbiting more common than not is preceded by suspicion. Ascribing motives lead to suspicion for backbiting. Backbiting is like scratching your mosquito bite, ultimately it just ends up in exacerbating your small mosquito bite into big wound.

It's the easiest thing in the world to do. In my book, backbiting is saying something about somebody behind his back which might hurt his feelings, if he were to hear it, even though it might be the truth. People when they are backbite justify by saying "but, this is the truth" so, GOD has given His answer in 104:1 *"Woe to every backbiter, slanderer."* i.e. if you are saying the truth. You are backbiting, if false, you are slandering. The reference to eating the flesh of your dead bother is allegorical, but I mean, can you imagine something which is compared to 'eating the flesh of your dead brother', and we still continue to do it, wantonly and brazenly, in contravention of God's direct commandment of, *"you shall not backbite."*

The second thing is (it can be surprising to a lot of people) is gluttony. Remember, I am talking about the fine print. In 7:31 GOD has mentioned, *"..and eat and drink moderately; surely He does not love the gluttons."* Now, gluttony is a relative term. Our diet might be gluttony for a poor person, but one can very well realize when he is being normal, and when he is being a glutton. Surely one tends to over indulge from time to time, but if you do it always, then it is not good. Because it is all related to self control and discipline.

These are the subtle and visibly harmless traps which cause the slight loosening of our will power, that slight crack in the door which Satan with his relentless efforts, pries open.

The third is modesty. In 24:30 God has said, *"Tell the believing men that they shall subdue their eyes, and to maintain their chastity"*, and in 24:31 GOD has said, *"And tell the believing women to subdue their eyes, and maintain their chastity"*. Subduing one's eyes, is one of the most difficult things for me to do, even more difficult than avoiding backbiting. I mean these are simple things, but these are Satan's big weapons.

Fourthly, being humble. In 17:37 God says, *"You shall not walk proudly on earth." You cannot bore through the earth, not can you be as tall as the mountains*". This is another big topic worthy of an entire khutba. In 57:23 God says, *"Thus, you should not grieve over anything you miss, nor be proud of anything He has bestowed upon you. GOD does not love those who are boastful, proud."* I mean, this is such a simple easy thing to do, but it enters one's psyche ever so quietly, without one realizing it, and then one ends up paying for it.

Apart from this, there are a lot of small things like the innumerable, and often avoidable small lies we say throughout the day. If we scan the index of the Quran, we will come across so many of these small things which we have failed to inculcate in our daily lives. If one starts to pay attention to these small things, we will definitely achieve consistency in achieving a higher level of submission.

Of course, as human beings, we are bound to slip up and sometimes very badly. But the beauty lies in realizing it and trying to rectify these small character faults which creep in ever so quietly. And if to achieve success and everlasting fame in our chosen field, if we can pay attention to the small details and be finicky about every small thing which effects our business, why can't we do the same for our submission?

I think it is related to our just paying lip service about the Hereafter, rather than being consciously aware of it always. Because, coming back to my example, if I have something important to achieve in this worldly life immediately, my Salat, my imploring and my submission level goes high. So if we make the Hereafter our objective, I think till we are alive we will always have a high level of submission.

May GOD guide us in the right path.