

Chapter Nine

CONTROLLING OUR ANGER

Controlling our anger is a noble character. It implies strength of character and resolve. In contrast, when we get angry we lose control and we may say things that we will regret later on, or react in an irrational way.

We will discuss the following concepts:

- 1- Anger is a powerful emotion that blinds our thinking and causes us to lose control
- 2- We are advised to control our anger
- 3- How can we control our anger?
- 4- When is anger appropriate?
- 5- Who will incur Allah's wrath and anger

When we get angry we lose control and cannot think clearly

When we get angry our judgment is impaired and we cannot think clearly. We can harm others, when angry, both in word and in deed. We may not be aware of our behavior and become irrational.

Sulaiman Bin Abdurrahman related that two men were cursing each other, one of them was angry and red-faced. Allah's messenger (PBUH) said: (I know of a word, if he said it his anger will subside. If he said: "I seek protection in

Allah from the cursed Satan“). Those present said to the angry man: Did you not hear what the Prophet (PBUH) is saying? He said: “I am not insane”.

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim

In this Hadeeth the angry man was blinded by his emotion. He did not realize that his behavior was wrong, and did not heed the advice of Allah’s messenger.

Mujahed one of the early Muslim scholars said: (Satan said: “The children of Adam will fail and succumb to me in three situations: if they get drunk, I can lead them as I wish and they will do what I command; and if they get angry they will say things that they do not know, and will commit things that they will later on regret. I will promise them things not within their power and I will let them hate giving in charity“)

We are told to control our anger in the Qur’an & Sunnah

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) asked his companions: (Whom do you consider strong among you?). They said: The one strong physically. He said : (No strength is not brute physical strength, but a person is strong if he is able to control himself when angry)

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim

When a man asked Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for advice, he replied: (Do not get angry (control your anger). When asked again, he repeated his advice : (control your anger)

Narrated by Bokhari

When the Qur’an described those who are righteous and those who do good and who will be rewarded by Allah, the Qur’an cited the ability to control one’s anger as an important trait and characteristic:

﴿ وَالَّذِينَ تَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ ﴾

[الشورى: ٣٧]

Those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds, and, when they are angry even then forgive;

Ash-Shura’ 42 : 37

And

﴿ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَبِيمِ الْغَيْظِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ

تُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٣٤]

Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; for Allah loves those who do good.

Al-Imran 3 : 134

These two verses describe those righteous servants of Allah. Among their qualities that commend them and make them closer to Allah is their struggle and desire to control their anger and even forgive those who may have wronged them. We should not retaliate against those who injured us, rather we should forgive and make amends, and do what is right and good, as the Qur'an explains:

﴿ اَدْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ اَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ ۚ فَمَنْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ ﴾ [المؤمنون: ٩٦]

Repel evil with that which is best: We are well-acquainted with the things they say.

Al-Mumenoun 23 : 96

Ibn Abbas (A great Qur'anic scholar and companion of prophet Muhammad) said:

(This verse means patience when you are angry; and forgiveness after sustaining an injury. If Muslims do that, Allah will protect them from doing wrong and their enemies will submit to them).

How can we control our anger?

- 1- Remembering Allah and seeking His protection
- 2- Understanding that anger clouds our judgment and may lead to other sins
- 3- Keeping quiet and not making rash decisions when angry
- 4- Changing our position
- 5- Doing ablution

Remembering Allah and seeking His protection

When we are angry we are vulnerable to the evil suggestions of Satan and under his influence. We should turn to Allah seeking His help and protection, for He has promised to protect and safeguard His righteous servants:

﴿وَأَمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

[الأعراف: ٢٠٠]

If a suggestion from Satan assail thy (mind), seek refuge with Allah; for He heareth and knoweth (all things).

Al-Araf 7 : 200

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَافٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ﴾

[الأعراف: ٢٠١]

Those who fear Allah, when a thought of evil from Satan assaults them, bring Allah to remembrance, when lo! they see (aright)!

Al-Araf 7 : 201

Not making rash decisions when we are angry

If we understand that Anger is a strong violent emotion that clouds our judgment, then we are less likely to jump and make rash decisions when we are angry. We should wait till we have recovered and are able to see things more clearly.

Changing positions when angry

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised us to change position: (If one of you gets angry while he is standing, let him sit down; and if his anger does not go away, let him lie down) Narrated by Abou Dawood & Ahmad

Doing ablution

Allah's messenger advised us to do Wodou' (ablution) when we get angry. He said: (Anger is from Satan, and Satan was created from fire. Fire is extinguished with water. Therefore, when one gets angry he should do wodou') Narrated by Abou Dawood & Ahmad

When is anger appropriate?

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not get angry for personal reasons. But he got angry when Allah's orders were disobeyed or when someone wronged others.

Aesha related that Allah's messenger (PBUH) gave permission in a certain matter, but someone did not follow that order. He got angry and said: (Why some people avoid what Allah made lawful and allowed for me! By Allah I know Allah the best and amongst you I fear Him the most) Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim.

On another occasion a man said: I avoid the prayer because the Imam prolongs it so much. Allah's messenger got angry and said: (O people amongst you are those who make others hate this religion. If you lead the prayer shorten it, because among those praying behind you are those who are sick, and those who are old, and those pressed for time or preoccupied with other affairs)

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim.

Some deserve Allah's wrath and anger

The Qur'an describes certain categories whom Allah is angry with, and who deserve His wrath and punishment. Among these are the following:

- 1- Those who reject faith
- 2- The hypocrites and idolaters
- 3- Those who lie and cheat
- 4- Those who are not faithful to their promises

Those who reject faith will be humiliated and punished

﴿وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّنَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ﴾ [البقرة: ٦١]

They were covered with humiliation and misery: they drew on themselves the wrath of Allah. This because they went on rejecting the Signs of Allah and slaying His Messengers without just cause. This because they rebelled and went on transgressing.

Al-Baqara 2 : 61

The hypocrites and idolaters deserve Allah's wrath and his anger

﴿وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظُرٌّ
السَّوْءُ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ
مَصِيرًا ﴿٦﴾﴾ [الفتح: ٦]

And that He may punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and the Polytheists, men and women, who imagine an evil opinion of Allah. On them is a round of Evil: the Wrath of Allah is on them: He has cursed them and got Hell ready for them: and evil is it for a destination.

Al-Fath 48 : 6

Those who lie and cheat will find Allah angry with them

Ibn Masoud related that Allah's messenger (PBUH) said: (Whoever made an oath lying in order to cheat another Muslim, he will meet Allah and will find him angry with him)

Narrated by Bokhari & Muslim

Those who are not faithful to their promises also deserve Allah's wrath

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا
يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾﴾

[آل عمران: ٧٧]

As for those who sell the faith they owe to Allah and their own plighted word for a small price, they shall have no portion in the Hereafter: nor will Allah (deign to) speak to them or look at them on the Day of Judgment, nor will He cleanse them (of sin): they shall have a grievous Penalty.

Al-Imran 3 : 77

* * *