

For the last twenty years or so, teaching anger management became a major subject not only in schools of psychology but also schools of management around the country. However, Islam touches on this issue 1400 hundred years ago. Before we delve into explaining the reasons of anger or how to avoid it , we better define anger and anger management.

Anger is a natural and an emotional process when people get angry for a justified or an unjustified reason depend upon one's emotional and psychological mind set. Anger is different to different people. It depends upon people upbringing, learning the art of living during teenage years, genetic background, profession and even diet. If one is brought up within a domestic violent atmosphere, the result is a negative attitude. Or one is brought up with spoiling approach then the result is being either aggressive, demanding, or very stubborn. Or one brought up in a discriminatory atmosphere that men see themselves above women at home, the result is negative later years while Islam teaches us equality. Most of the time parents fail to teach their children the art of living. For example how to be respectful to others. How to be logical on different issues, or to teach them that to be stubborn is not a good quality of life , or to teach them practicing patience, forgiveness and tolerance. Or to teach them the art of reasoning not suspicion. Genetic background can be another issue on creating anger that is very difficult to trace, but with good education, teaching the art of living and teaching wisdom this can be subdued according to Islamic psychological principles. This is because behavior can be changed according to Islamic psychology by proper education. Omar Farouq (May Allah be please with him) was a stubborn person, but after accepting Islam and the role modeling he received from the Prophet, he changed. Sometimes people are working in a negative environment like in a prison that eventually make them an angry person. This happens when people loses the objectivity of life. Diet is another issue that may cause bad temper. Human being is a natural entity according to Islam. If one takes the wrong food that is not recommended by the Creator that cause negative result. For example Allah(SWT) explicitly mentions what people should eat or not to eat. This is because He knows what we need for our growth and need. If people violate this principle this may cause negative attitude. Allah(SWT) created everything for our moderate use, and if we eat too much of it or not eating at all that will unbalance our system and affect our temper. Halal meat, vegetable, wheat, rice all made for our moderate use. The body needs all this based upon the climate we live in and biological make up of our own nature. Bad temper could be the result of a variety of issues, but when we claim to be a Muslim, then we have to tackle the problem by Islamic principles. One major task in Islamic psychology is patience, and how to practice patience. It is not easy for an ordinary person but if Muslim resort to the Qur'an and the role modeling of the Prophet (peace be upon him) then , the mercy of Allah is bestowed upon us.

Anger Management is how to control anger which is a very normal emotional state of mind. But that is not all in Islamic psychology. We should not only control it but live with the person who caused it at peace. If we are not living at peace with the person who caused it then we are still angry. Ignoring people and cutting relationship with relatives is not an Islamic principle and is against mode of ethics and morality.

There are variety of reasons that people get angry according to socio-psychology of Islam. In this essay, we try to elaborate on each one and show the treatment.

The Qur'an clearly says, “ Who suppress their rage, and who pardon people for God loves those who excel in doing good” (Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 134). Also, the Qur'an says, “ For had you been harsh and hard-hearted , then they would have disbanded from around you. So pardon them. And ask

forgiveness for them. And take counsel with them.” (Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 159).

There are a few points that the above two verses addresses. First of all, this verse asks people to not get angry. Second, to forgive people. Third, if one is harsh to people, people would be dispersed from around him. Fourth, better consult them, investigate and resolve the issue rather than be angry, or keep it in your heart. It is always good to communicate your anger positively. At the same time Allah (SWT) does not love those who are not humble saying, “ Indeed, God does not love anyone who is self-conceited, boastful.” (Qur'an, Chapter 4, Verse 36). Also, Allah(SWT) forbids people to be aggressive by saying, “Indeed, God does not love the transgressors.” (Qur'an, Chapter 5: Verse 87).

We can clearly see that Allah (SWT) condemning anger, aggression and selfishness. And love those who are acting against these evil things. In our Islamic family and community there are few things that make people angry:

1. When people rights is violated. For example freedom of mind is a God given right, and if some one violated this right and abandon you to not say what you like to say; in this case, a family gathering should take place and very respectfully the issue should be discussed. Or families get angry at each other over inheritance issues. It should be discussed amicably. If this does not help then some elders outside the family should be consulted. If this step fails then a person should resort to the court of law and seek a judge advice. People rights could be violated at home or society.
2. People get angry when they hear something about themselves behind their back and that is a gossip. Some one reports something to another person. This act of reporting is “Haram” (Prohibited) because it considers to be a gossip. Gossip, backbiting, spying and suspicion are all haram in Islam. Whatever Allah (SWT) made haram and we do otherwise is a great sin. The Qur'an says, “ O you who believe! Shun much suspicion. For, indeed, certain kind of suspicion are sinful. Nor should you spy on each other. Nor shall you backbite on one another.” According to the Qur'an backbiting and gossip is like eating a brother's flesh, and the verse continue saying, “ Would any of you like to eat his dead brother's flesh? You would, most surely, abhor it. So fear God. Indeed, God is all-relenting, mercy-giving.” (Qur'an, Chapter 49: Verse 12). It is against Islamic moral that one accepts anything when reported to him and cause animosity. The person should contact that person and consult with him instead of being angry. The irony is that most of the time the closest person in people's life fabricate things, lie, and create an atmosphere of hate and animosity and the victim accepting it. Therefore, suspicion is a sin and should be avoided. The solution for this is that we should not accept anything unless we hear it or see it ourselves. If some one else reports to us that gives us a bad feeling about that person, we should know, even if he or she is the closest person to us that he or she violated Allah's law and committed wrong doing by gossiping. We should always report to each other good news not bad news that may cause problems between family members or friends.
3. People get angry because they are oppressed for economic reason, social reasons, labor exploitation and the like. No one should allow to be exploited and should stand firm for his/her right. The Qur'an condemn oppression saying, “ For God does not love the oppressors.” (Qur'an, Chapter 3, Verse 140) or “ For God does not Guide the oppressors.” (Qur'an, Chapter 2, Verse 258). In the history of the United States many fought against oppression but three African Americans, two men and one one woman stand high in their struggle and they were Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Rosa Parks(They all may be at peace). No one should be allowed to be oppressed or oppress others. Oppression of any kind including husband to wife such as wife abuse is against human dignity and integrity.
4. Accusation is another form of immoral approach that make people angry. In this case the accused should ask for solid proof. If there is no constructive proof, three witnesses that are not related should witness the wrong doing. One person who is related to the accuser is not a solid proof because that could be bias and being fabricated between the accuser and his/her associate

or friend. In case of adultery, the Qur'an asks people to bring forward four witnesses. Nowadays, when people fail to achieve their evil desires, they resort to accusation. This is very much true with celebrities and people of fame. This also may have caused by jealousy, and the Qur'an condemn jealousy.

5. People get angry when they hear some view points that are different than their own. This include religious matters. Human being has been created free and has freedom to think. If your view is different than others that is because you are human being and not a sheep. The Prophet said "The difference of opinion is a blessing of my ummah." We should all learn how to accept each other view point without getting angry. We do not need to accept what one says but respect it.
6. Families have ultra expectation from each other. We should lower our expectation even from our children and preserve our independence. Many people get angry because their surrounding do not meet their expectation. We should assess some one life and accept him/her without too much expectation.
7. People get angry when some one borrowed money form them and he does not return it on time. Lending money should be in the form of writing and the presence of two witnesses according to the Qur'an. The letter should be notarized. If we fail to do so, we better take the consequences and be angry at ourselves that we violated the Quranic principles.
8. Another area that makes people angry is to interfere in some one life. In our community this happens quiet often that family members interfering to each other business. The reason people interfere in our life is because we allow them to do so. It is our own weaknesses when some one interfere in our life. We should politely and firmly convey the message to not interfere unless they ask for advice.
9. We should all remember that no one is perfect. We all make mistakes. If we make a mistake, then better apologize. And people should forgive. But if one makes a mistake and not apologize then he is a selfish person. A pious people are those who apologize and forgive.
10. It is recommended by our Prophet that in time of anger better quit and perform wudu (ablution). This way one cool off his anger. Also, the Prophet recommended that one better sit if he is standing or lay down to cool down his anger.
11. Human being is made of qualities that are positive and negative energies that put his/her *nafs*(soul) into a huge challenge. A Muslim should use and promote his /her positive energy rather than of negative energy into action and practice. This can happen if we use the most sophisticated gift of Allah given to us and that is *Aql* (intelligence), and think positive.
12. Another issue that make people angry is we expect people including our family members to think like us, dress like us, behave like us, and see the world like we do. This is impossible and against is human nature. In regard of manners, if family members have learned some manners before the age of 18, that will continue in their adulthood. If they have not learned social manners and they don't try to learn, better accept them the way they are. If Muslims deliberately stay away from the source of knowledge that is the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet that is a bad choice they made, and we cannot force them. This problem has rooted in people's childhood that they were not taught proper civic education. One of the major problem that parents do not pay attention is to teach their children listening skill. And if a person in adulthood behave not civilly—not respecting people's opinion, disrespecting the elderly in Muslim culture, being stubborn, not knowing his/her position within family circles or society, all relates to lack of civic education. This can be learned since civic education is acquired knowledge. If people after the age of 18 do not listen that is their problem. These people will have problem with themselves and unfortunately with others. Better ignore them rather than argue with them because they have not learned reasoning.
13. Some people including family members lose the side of humility and they think they are better

than others. This sense of superiority not only isolate them but also make people think negative about them. Islam teaches humility and God only acknowledge people on the basis of piety.

14. The Qur'an teaches us patience. In all aspect of life, a Muslim should practice patience. Patience is a virtue. Cutting relationship with fellow Muslims being in the family or outside is not Islamic. Islam teaches brotherhood and compassion and cooperation. It is obvious that we cannot love everyone including our family members but Islam teaches us to respect each other. But if Muslim families base their relationship on Islamic values, Allah (SWT) bless us with love and people would love each other. The main reason that we have problem in our community or family is because the obedience of Allah does not exist, the love for the Prophet has been disappeared. Islam as civilized way of life only works for us if we put it into action in our daily lives.

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