

ALI 340: Elements of Effective Communication

Session Five

O Allah . . . Make everything he [the Shaytan] causes to pass over my tongue, - the indecent or ugly words, the maligning of good repute, the false witness, the speaking ill of an absent man of faith or the reviling of one present, and all things similar - a speech in praise of You, a perusal of eulogizing You, an excursion in magnifying You, a thanksgiving for Your favour, an acknowledgement of Your beneficence, and an enumeration of Your kindnesses

From: Dua Makarimul Akhlaq, Sahifa Sajjadiyya

Agenda

- The Holy Quran
- Understanding Anger
- Communication styles
- Managing Anger
- Examples from the Holy Quran

The Holy Quran

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ
وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا
وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Those only are believers
whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned
and when His signs are recited to them
they increase in faith
and in their Lord do they trust.

Sura Anfal, 8:2

Understanding Anger

Anger has been described as an unpleasant and uncomfortable feeling in response to the behavior of others.

Allah in His wisdom has created the emotion of anger in man so he can defend what is right for himself and others. However when he loses control of his anger and goes beyond what is appropriate, his behavior has harmful repercussions. Islam seeks to prevent this by warning man of the need to control his anger.

Anger is a secondary emotion, usually preceded by pain or fear. It creates mental and emotional pains and fears. The angry response is the human defense against the threat of that pain or fear.

The emotion of anger is accompanied by:

- a) angry thoughts of being frustrated or wronged etc.
- b) physiological symptoms such as a flushed face, increased blood pressure
- c) behavior that is a direct result of the anger such as yelling, sulking etc.

Anger, in fact, is an inner psychic movement due to which a state of agitation is produced in the heart's blood, arousing a desire for vengeance. And when this agitation becomes more violent, it intensifies the fire of anger. A violent commotion of the blood seizes the heart, filling the arteries and the brain with a flurry of dark smoke, on account of which the mind and the intellect lose control and become powerless.

Imam Khumayni,

Forty hadith-An Exposition. (Hadith no.7)

Communication Styles

- 1) Aggressive – You disregard the feelings and opinions of others. You appear self righteous or superior.
- 2) Passive – You don't think your thoughts and feelings are as important as others around you. You are willing to give in most of the time.
- 3) Passive-Aggressive – You say yes when you want to say no. Rather than confront an issue directly, you may show your anger and feelings through your actions or negative attitude.
- 4) Assertive - you respect yourself and are willing to stand up for yourself. You are also aware of the rights of others and are willing to work on resolving conflicts.

Further reading:

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/assertive/art-20044644>

Managing Anger

- 1) Anticipating anger - A powerful way to diffuse anger even before it arises is to anticipate its occurrence. Although this may not always be true, sometimes one can predict a situation which may lead to an angry outburst.
- 2) Controlling it in its initial stages - Once anger is aroused it is best to control while it is still beginning. To fan the flames of anger by thinking more angry thoughts, and bringing in other matters to aggravate the situation, makes the situation very volatile

3) Diffusing anger

- a) **Thinking of Allah and His patience with human beings.**
The Holy Prophet (s) was once talking to Imam Ali (a) and he said: *O Ali; do not get angry. And if you do then sit and think about the power of the Lord over His servants, and His forbearance with them.*
- b) **Changing the body's physiology.** According to the Holy Prophet (s) one who is very angry should change his body position. He should sit if he was standing, and stand if he was sitting. It also helps to take deep breaths, lower the voice deliberately, and splash water on the face.
- c) **Taking time out to cool off.** An angry person should remind himself that he is not in a reasonable state and cannot deal with the situation very well. The best thing to do is take time to cool the anger and then deal with the situation.

Among the practical remedies the important ones involve withholding the self in the initial stages of anger. This is because it is ignited little by little, becoming more intense until its furnace is set burning fiercely and its flame becomes violent and furious. When that happens it gets completely out of control and shuts off the lights of one's faith and intellect. . . . therefore one should be on one's guard so as to disassociate oneself by some means before its fierceness mounts and its fire becomes more violent.

**Imam Khumayni,
Forty hadith-An Exposition. (Hadith no.7)**

Hadith al Qudsi on Anger

When My servant remembers me when he is angry
I will remember him on the Day of Judgment
among the whole of my creation
and I will not destroy him
among those whom I destroy

Examples from the Holy Quran

Anger of Nabi Musa (a)

When Musa returned to his people, angry and indignant he said, evil has been your conduct in my absence. Did you turn away from the bidding of your Lord? And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by the head, dragging him towards him. He said, son of my mother, indeed this people thought me to be weak, and they were about to kill me. So do not let the enemies gloat over me and do not count me among the unjust people.

Sura A'raaf, 7:150

Anger of Nabi Sulayman (a)

وَتَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَا أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَائِبِينَ
لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَذْبَحَنَّهُ أَوْ لِيَأْتِنِي بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

One day he reviewed the birds and said, why do I not see the hoopoe, or is he absent? I will surely punish him with a severe punishment or I will behead him unless he brings a clear cut excuse.

Sura an-Naml, 27:20-21

Anger of Nabi Yunus (a)

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

And Yunus when he went away in anger thinking
We would not put him in hardship.

Then he cried out in the darkness,

There is no god except You, Glory be to You
I have indeed been from among the wrongdoers.

Sura Anbiya, 21:87