

# Managing Anger in Islam

## Part II – Why We Get Angry

There are many different reasons some are relevant to our own internal insecurities, culture and upbringing. Others deal with the actions of the person with whom we are angry. I will detail examples of both Insha Allah.

### 1. Our Own: Ego

This is the most common reason is that we feel slighted by someone else's actions be it a child talking back, a person accusing us falsely or insulting us, etc.

We may think of ourselves as humble and respectful. Unfortunately, we discover our egos only when we are confronted with a hostile issue. You notice that Allah SWT says in Surah Al-Furqan (in translation):

“Slaves of Allah are those that walk on earth humbly and when they are talked to by ignorant people they say Salam (meaning peace and walking away)”.

The association between humility and tolerance in this verse of the Quran is unmistakable and undeniable.

When confronted with someone demeaning us and lobbing all kinds of accusations against us, our egos trigger such anger and such words that often have something like this:

“I am (better terms).. Who are you to... You are a ... You did this and that” and so forth.

### 2. Our Own: Unrealistic (or Unmet) Expectations

We often expect a lot of others especially those that are close to us. Sometimes our expectations are mixed with our own ego (see part 1) where we expect our child to be an honor student and get angry when that is not met.

Often people who have such high expectations of others do not even meet the criteria they set for others. Like the demanding parent getting angry for less than an A+ when he/she was a B or worse student themselves.

We may be perfections ourselves and are hard-working and we may feel frustrated when others do not perform to our levels. We get angry asking why I have to work this hard when you do not perform to the same level. This type of frustration is too common in groups where responsibilities are shared but team dynamics reduces accountability.

Anas Bin Malik who served prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from the age of 10 narrates that prophet Muhammad (PBUH) never admonished for something Anas did saying “why did you do that” or

something he did not do saying “why did you do that”. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on one occasion sent Anas on a chore and Anas lagged behind playing with kids. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) simply came behind him and told Anas to go where he (PBUH) sent him. Then the prophet (PBUH) sat on the street waiting for Anas to come back.

### **3. Our Own: Thinking the Worst in People**

We may jump to conclusions and we may misinterpret something someone said or even we may hear second hand about something others may have said or done.

Please note that Allah SWT said in Surah Al-Hujurat (in translation):

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin”

Allah also said in the same Surah (in translation):

“O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful”

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said as narrated by Muslim:

“Avoid assuming things in other as assumptions are the worst type of lying talk”.

### **4. External: The Actions of the Ignorant**

I am going to narrate only one thing that happened to prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as an example:

Anas Bin Malik narrates (in Bukhari and Muslim) that he was walking with prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who was wearing a thick type of clothes. A man comes to prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and yanks him from his collar to the point it left a mark on the prophet’s neck. The man said” Oh, Muhammad. Give me from the money of Allah that you have. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) turned to the man then laughed and ordered that the man be given money”.

### **5. External: The Actions of Others trying to get us Angry**

There may be those that want us to slip and say the wrong things in anger so they may do certain things to throw us off. They enjoy seeing us in a bad situation or even with our reputation ruined. They may be excellent at pushing our buttons. Yet, we must stay above the fray and not give them this satisfaction.

Another form of instigating anger is when a spouse deprived of intimacy from her spouse tries to get him/her angry simply to feel that the other person still cares. They see anger as a negative attention but attention nonetheless. It is better to them than the deafening silence or being ignored.