

# CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF CHAUTAUQUA

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## Jewish Psychology – Anger - Week 2 – 2021

1. 1:1 There are many temperaments, all of which are different and each of which is distinct, and which are possessed by different people. There are people of angry disposition who are always annoyed, and there are those who are even-tempered and are never angry, and if they do get angry, it is only slightly and rarely...
2. 1:4. The way of the upright is [to adopt] the intermediate characteristic of each and every temperament that people have. This is the characteristic that is equidistant from the two extremes of the temperament of which it is a characteristic, and is not closer to either of the extremes. Therefore, the first Sages commanded that one's temperaments should always be such, and that one should postulate on them and direct them along the middle way, in order that one will have a perfect body. How is this done? One should not be of an angry disposition and be easily angered, nor should one be like a dead person who does not feel, but one should be in the middle - one should not get angry except over a big matter about which it is fitting to get angry, so that one will not act similarly again....
3. 1:5 Any man whose temperaments are intermediate is called wise. One who is particular with himself and moves away from the middle ways to either extreme is called pious....
4. 1:6 We are commanded to go in these middle ways, the good and upright ways...
5. 2:3. There are some intermediate temperaments which one is forbidden to have, but one should adopt one of the extremities of such temperaments... Anger is also an exceptionally bad quality. It is fitting and proper that one move away from it and adopt the opposite extreme. He should school himself not to become angry even when it is fitting to be angry. If he should wish to arouse fear in his children and household - or within the community, if he is a communal leader - and wishes to be angry at them to motivate them to return to the proper path, he should present an angry front to them to punish them, but he should be inwardly calm. He should be like one who acts out the part of an angry man in his wrath, but is not himself angry.
6. The early Sages [*Zohar I 27b, II, 182b III 179a*] said: Anyone who becomes angry is like one who worships idols. They also said: Whenever one becomes angry, if he is a wise man, his wisdom leaves him; if he is a prophet, his prophecy leaves him. The life of the irate is not true life.
7. Therefore, they have directed that one distance himself from anger and accustom himself not to feel any reaction, even to things which provoke anger. This is the good path.
8. This is the way of the righteous: They accept humiliation, but do not humiliate others; they listen when they are shamed, but they do not answer; they do this with love and are joyous in their sufferings. Of them, Judges 5:31 states: "And those who love Him are like the sun when it comes out in its strength." (Maimonides, *Mishne Torah, Laws of Deot Ch. 1-2*)
9. *Moses became angry with the officers of the army... Eleazar the kohen said to the soldiers returning from battle, "This is the statute that the L-rd commanded Moses.* (Numbers 31:14, 21)
  - a. **RASHI:** Eleazar the kohen... Since Moses came to a state of anger, he came to err, for the laws of purging gentile vessels eluded him. A similar incident happened on the eighth day of inauguration, as it says, "He [Moses] became angry with Eleazar and Ithamar" (Leviticus 10: 16); he came to a state of anger, so he came to err. Similarly, in the episode of "Now listen, you rebels... and struck the rock" (20:10-11); through anger, he came to err. [*Sifrei Mattoth 48*]
10. Reish Lakish said: Any person who becomes angry, if he is a Torah scholar, his wisdom departs from him, and if he is a prophet, his prophecy departs from him. That if he is a Torah scholar his wisdom departs from him is learned from Moses, as it is written: "*And Moses became angry with the officers of the host, the captains over thousands and the captains over hundreds, who came from the battle*" (Numbers 31:14). And what was his punishment? As it is written afterward: "*And Elazar the priest said to the men of war who went to the battle: This is the statute of the law, which the L-rd commanded Moses*" (Numbers 31:21), [which proves by inference that this law had become hidden from Moses due to his anger.] And that if he is a prophet, his prophecy departs from him, we learn from Elisha, as it is written that he became angry with the king of Israel and said to him: "*Were it not that I have regard for the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judea, I would not look toward you, nor see you*" (II Kings 3:14), and it is afterward written: "*But now bring me a minstrel; and it came to pass when the minstrel played that the hand of the L-rd came upon him*" (II Kings 3:15). (Talmud, *Pesachim 66b*)
11. Rabba bar Rav Huna said: Anyone who gets angry, at that moment even the Divine Presence is not important to him, as it is stated: "*The wicked, in the height of his anger says: He will not require; all his thoughts are: There is no G-d*" (Psalms 10:4). Rabbi Yirmeya of Difti said: Anyone who gets angry forgets his learning and increases foolishness, as it is stated: "*For anger rests in the bosom of fools*" (Ecclesiastes 7:9), and it is written: "*But a fool unfolds folly*" (Proverbs 13:16). (Talmud, *Tractate Nedarim 22b*)

12. 1:7 How should one regulate oneself with these temperaments so that they become permanent? One should act once, twice, three times - the actions which one does according to the intermediate temperaments - and always go back over them, until such actions are easy for one to do and will not be troublesome for one, and until such temperaments are fixed in one's soul.
13. 2:2. How do they cure? They tell someone who is of an angry disposition to establish himself, and that if he is hit or cursed he should not react, and he should follow this way until his angry disposition has left him... and he returns to the middle way, which is the good way. Once he has returned to the middle way he should follow it for the rest of his life... the good way, which is the intermediate characteristic that each and every temperament has. (Maimonides, *ibid*)
14. *But now do not be sad, and let it not trouble you that you sold me here, for it was to preserve life that G-d sent me before you. For already two years of famine [have passed] in the midst of the land, and [for] another five years, there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And G-d sent me before you to make for you a remnant in the land, and to preserve [it] for you for a great deliverance. And now, you did not send me here, but G-d, and He made me a father to Pharaoh, a L-rd over all his household, and a ruler over the entire land of Egypt.* (Geneses, 45:5-8).
15. "Whoever is in a rage resembles an idolater." The reason [for this] is... because at the time of his anger, faith in G-d and in His individual Divine Providence has left him. For were he to believe that what happened to him was G-d's doing, he would not be angry at all.  
True, it is a person possessed of free choice that is cursing him, or striking him, or causing damage to his property, and [therefore] guilty according to the laws of man and the laws of heaven for his evil choice. The perpetrator for his part cannot plead innocence on the grounds that he is merely an instrument in the hands of Divine Providence. Nevertheless, as regards the person harmed, this [incident] was already decreed in heaven, and "G-d has many agents" through whom He can act [Zohar III, 36b; Talmud, Tractate Taanit 18b]..  
Hence, even if the offending party had chosen otherwise, the incident would have befallen the victim in any case. Anger thus remains unjustifiable. For the offended party is not angry that the other party made an evil choice; what angers him is the damage done to him. His anger thus results from his lack of belief that the true cause for his mishap is not a particular individual's evil choice, but a heavenly decree.  
And not only this, that a heavenly decree gave permission in principle and made it possible that he suffer injury, but even at that very moment at which [the offender] strikes or curses him, there is vested in him (in the offender) a force from G-d and the breath of His mouth, which animates and sustains him; (Tanya, Igeret Hakodesh, 25)
16. One soul originates in the kelipah and sitra achra... From [this nefesh] stem all the evil characteristics, deriving from the four evil elements within it. Namely: anger and pride [emanate] from the element of Fire which rises upwards; [Anger too is an offshoot of pride. Would a person not be proud, he would not be angered when someone defied his will] (Tanya Ch. 1)
17. 4:1 ...Who is strong? One who overpowers his inclinations. As is stated (Proverbs 16:32), "*Better one who is slow to anger than one with might, one who rules his spirit than the captor of a city.*"
18. 4:18 Rabbi Shimon the son of Elazar would say: Do not appease your friend at the height of his anger;
19. 5:11. There are four types of temperaments. One who is easily angered and easily appeased--his virtue cancels his flaw. One whom it is difficult to anger and difficult to appease--his flaw cancels his virtue. One whom it is difficult to anger and is easily appeased, is a chassid. One who is easily angered and is difficult to appease, is wicked. (Ethics of our Fathers)
20. Do not think that repentance is only for sins which involve an action, sins such as adultery, theft and robbery, but just as one has to repent if one committed such sins, so also does one have to seek out one's bad characteristics and abandon [those such as] anger, hatred, jealousy, jesting, financial greed, honour, megalomania and similar characteristics - one has to return in repentance from all of these. These are the more serious sins which involve an action, for once one sinks into them it is very difficult to leave them. It is written with reference to this, "*Let the wicked abandon his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*". (Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Laws of Teshuva 7:3)
21. One should always stir up the anger of his good inclination against his evil inclination. (Talmud, Tractate Berachot 5a).
22. A person is "known" by his anger בכעסו, by his goblet בכוסו, and by his wallet בכיסו . (Jewish proverb)
23. *Remove anger from your heart (thus) remove pain from your body.* (Ecclesiastes 11:10)

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