**Controlling Anger**

Dua

Passage narration from the Quran (Surah Luqman 17-19)

Ya bunayya Aqimissalata wa’mur blimaroofi wanha anil munkari wasbir ala maa asabaka Inna zalika min azm il umoor. Wala tusa’ir khaddaka linnasi wala tamshi filardi marahan InnaALlah la yuhibbu kulla mukhtalin fakhoor. Waqsid fi Mashyika waghdud min sautika Inna ankaral aswaati lasautul hameer

Dua

In Sha Allah Taala in today’s reminder I’d like to share some thoughts with you that I hope to benefit from myself and hope that they are of benefit to all of you as well in regards to a very dangerous, and at the same time a very natural, sentiment all of us have and that is Anger.

Anger is very natural. It’s not an unnatural sentiment for you to be angry. There are many occasions that make you angry and make me angry. Sometimes those things are small and sometimes they are big. But this feeling is rooted in something else. It’s rooted in something else and if it’s not rooted in something healthy it can become very dangerous. It’s really a symptom of a much larger disease.

I chose this passage to share with you because this is a passage in which Luqman Razi Allaho Anho is giving advice to his son and there are other occasions in the Quran where a father is talking to his son. Yaqoob ah talks to his sons you know “ya bunayya\_\_\_”[[1]](#footnote-1) . gives advice to his sons also. So this idea of a father giving advice to his son is not unique in the Quran. It’s something Allah iterates multiple times. So it’s something you should pay attention to. And if you think of this picture, you see them, an older man of wisdom, Allah has given him wisdom “wa laqad aataina Luqman Al hikmah” he’s giving advice to his young and you can call inexperienced son. A lot of us are in the position. A lot of you got older and you try and give advice to your son and you’ll notice something. As you get older and wisdom kicks in or if you are fortunate enough to benefit from wisdom, what it brings also is patience. And what you’ll notice in your sons, in your young men that are growing up is impatience. And they are repulsing. They get angry very easily.

So one of the very important pieces of advice for a young man to get from someone who has wisdom above him like his father is for him to calm down, to keep himself in check, to control himself. So with that in mind, you’re keeping in mind that this is a father giving advice to his son, let’s see some of the things he tells him to do. First, “Ya bunayya aqeemis salat” “my son, establish salat” and the word salah interestingly, this is of course preIslamic conversation, pre the Messenger of Allah SAW, so this salah is not just using the official sense of five daily prayers. That was given to our Messenger Alaihi salatu wassalam. Every messenger was given their own form of salah and finally the perfection of it is in our Messenger’s Sunnah (SAW). But in the original sense what the word salah comes from is “sila” which means “connection”. Maintain a connection with Allah. You know, practically this discussion from father to son this counsel began with “la yushriku billah” “do not do shirk with Allah”. Don’t associate partners with Allah. Don’t do the ultimate crime of distancing yourself from Allah by putting someone else between yourself and Allah. That’s shirk. And practically, to not do shirk. Practically. Not just theoretically, philosophically, ideologically. *Practically* to not do shirk one has to be connected to Allah and not connected to anything else. And the device, the mechanism by which a believer gets connected to Allah is salat itself. It literally protects our Tawheed. This salat, this connection with Allah. It doesn’t let anybody else come in between. When you and I are making salah it’s just us in conversation with Allah Azza wa jal directly. Allah azza wa jal responding to every part of the Fatiha that we recite. It’s a direct method. Aqeemis salat

This creates a transformation inside somebody’s character. It’s like a revolution happens inside yourself. But this change that happens inside yourself cannot remain inside yourself. You know when something that’s hot, the heat spreads. When a candle is lit, it doesn’t just light itself, the light spreads. When a person gets lit, when salat lights you up, then it will have an impact on your surroundings. So the natural result of a real connection to Allah through salat, a natural result of that is what the father, this father full of wisdom, tells his son next. He says “wa mur blimaroofi wanha anil munkar” Command, enjoin, advise people to do good. Advise goodness. Command goodness. Suggest goodness. Amr is a beautiful word in the Arabic language. It doesn’t just mean command. It can actually also mean to advise, or to suggest. And in different situations, you need different things. If you try to command someone every time, it’ll backfire. Sometimes all they need is suggestion; sometimes all they need is advice. Sometimes you’re in a position to command and you *should* command. But every situation calls for its own theme. For example you have sayyidna Yaqoob (ah) and his sons. Obviously he is their father so he’s in a position to command them so when they come back with a dirty shirt full of blood, false blood, he is in fact in a position to command them because he’s their father but does he command them? No, because he is far more intelligent than that. He has wisdom. He knows commanding them right now will not do any good. The only thing I can have right now is sabr. So he refrains from commanding because it’s not the right time. It takes wisdom. It takes wisdom to have authority and still not use it. You know. This is something we learn in Quran

So Allah azza wa jal first says maintain a connection with Allah. Aqimis salat. Establish the salat. Then as a result of that you will truly be able to suggest or advise or even command to do what is decent. And interestingly enough the positive is mentioned before the negative. Commanding or advising people to do what is known to be decent, not just al-khair, “al maroof”. Al maroof is a very interesting word. Usually that’s translated as good, right? But the Arabic word “khair” is closer to the word “good”. “maroof” is an ism, it’s an objective noun. It’s a passive noun. It implies that which is known. In other words it’s known to be good. You’re giving someone advice and it’s not news to them. They already knew this is something good. It’s just a reminder. In other words the first thing you should call people to do is something they already recognize to be good and true. Honesty, patience, kindness, keeping family relations. You don’t have to be an Islamic scholar to do these things. You just have to be a decent human being. Even non muslins know that much. It is even maroof to them. It is even known to them. Start with that and then move on. “Amr bil maroof wanha anil munkar”. Then forbid. Then forbid from munkar. Something unrecognized. Literally, something unrecognized, something nobody recognizes to be good. It’s the literal opposite of al-maroof from a language point of view. Something nobody recognizes as good. It’s alien to every society. Being mean to someone, cursing someone, right? being rude to someone, raising your voice, these are things, it doesn’t matter if you’re Muslim or not. Even if people who do it, they will know it deep down inside, that’s not right. That’s no way to talk to someone. So there’s wanha anil munkar later because that’s just the progression of how you deal with people. First you benefit from the goodness of salat yourself, then you want others to benefit from goodness. So you give them something good, something they know to be good. And then eventually when you have a relationship with them, at that point you can say you know you need to stop this bad thing that you’re into. You know what we do all the time, when we need to give advice to somebody, we go straight after the munkar, right? “You know what you’re doing is wrong over here. This over here, you can’t talk like that. You can’t do this you can’t do that” and the first defence mechanism that is built into the human psyche is that “who do you think you are talking to me like that? You can’t talk to me like that you can’t tell me what to do. Who made you the authority?” right? People don’t respond to that. This attitude. You and I wouldn’t respond to it. If somebody just comes up to you and starts telling you all the wrong things you are doing you’ll be like “leave me alone, man”. Your own wife doesn’t respond to that. You know you could have phrased that better. Uh huh. You gotta complement her. Gee that’s pretty amazing. That would be more intelligent.

“Wasbir Ala Ma Asaabak”. This is what I wanted to get to. What I said about commanding good and prohibiting evil or the known and the unknown. It’s about anger.

What I want to talk to you about is anger. When someone benefits from the goodness of religion, of this deen, they get what they are supposed to get out of salah and they wanna share that goodness with others. But others have no appreciation of that. You try to give somebody good advice and they don’t care about it. They spit at it. They take it to the kerb. And you say to yourself, man I’m giving you some really good advice. I went out of my way to try to help you and this is what you do in return. Naturally, you would get angry. It’s just one of the manifestations of anger. Try to give somebody advice, you try to tell someone something good and they don’t appreciate it. They all, they kick it to the kerb. This is an occasion of someone getting angry.

I want you to think about it. What are some other occasions when you and I get angry? When you and I have expectations. I have an expectation from my son, from my daughter, from my wife, from my husband. I have an expectation. That expectation is not matched. I am gonna get angry. There is an expectation I have from my employee. Better show up on time. He shows up 40 minutes late. Guess what? I’m gonna get angry. It’s natural. Whenever we have expectations and they are not met, we get upset. When we have rights, I have a right to get respect. I have a right to do this. As a teacher, if I’m teaching in a class, I have certain rights. If I’m a parent I have certain rights over my kids. If I’m a husband or a wife I have some rights over my wife or husband. Either way.

And when rights are violated, when your rights are not given to you, when a wife speaks to her husband in an inappropriate way the husband says you can’t talk to me like that. He gets upset because his rights are violated. Expectation, when expectations aren’t met, when rights are violated, when injustice is done. It’s not fair, you can’t do that. When your boss doesn’t give you your pay check. He gives you half the pay check, you know, he says I can’t give you the other half coz I’m going on vacation. You can’t do that. You don’t have the right. When justice is not served naturally we get angry. Look at all those “Occupy wall street”, “Occupy Dallas”, “Occupy Sacramento”. What’s that all about? People getting angry because they feel that justice is not being served. The lack of justice makes someone get angry.

All of these are legitimate kinds of anger. Sometimes by the way in a religious context there are people who get angry when something is said against the religion. Something inappropriate is said about Islam we get angry. People marking out the Messenger alaihis salato wassalam we get angry. People say something against the Quran we get angry. I will put this in perspective. You and I have a right to get angry. We certainly do in these cases we have a right to get angry. But what that anger should turn into, according to our deen, is **sabr**. It’s a feeling inside you, it goes through our heart and our heart should convert that into sabr. That is what it is supposed to be. Now when our heart is not connected to Allah then sabr is out. Then that anger comes out in other ways.

Now im going to talk about a couple of examples. One of my favourite examples. You know by the way, you and I get angry but that’s nothing compared to when Allah gets angry. Nothing compared to that. There’s a group of people in this world who claim that Allah azza wa jal has a son. This statement makes not just believers, it makes Allah angry. It makes Him so angry that He says “perhaps the skies and the earth are about to tear open every time they say Allah has a son”. Every time they say Allah has a son Allah gets so angry that He is about to destroy the entire universe out of rage. That’s how offensive that statement is to Allah. I want you to remember this. How angry Allah gets when something inappropriate is said about Him. He has multiple reasons to get angry. One: something inappropriate has been said about Allah. Two: something inappropriate has been said about one of His beloved messengers. It’s a lie against His messenger; and three: it’s a lie against his teachings. He has given his life teaching tawheed and now his life is turning into shirk. It’s an offense on multiple accounts. An extreme offense. Now I want you to keep that in mind as we go forward.

A group of Christians, they used to live in this area called Najran at the time of the Prophet saw. They heard that there is a man in Madina who is claiming to be a messenger, we should go check him out. We should go talk to him. So they came to the Messenger of Allah saw. Back in the day its not a holiday. There are no hotels. So where did these Christians stay? They stayed in Al Masjid al Nabawi. They stayed in the masjid of the Prophet SAW. The same people who believe the most offensive thing to Allah are honoured guests, honoured guest, in the house of Allah. And every Muslim speaks to them with respect. And they have a healthy conversation back and forth defending their faith. Defending what? That Allah has a son. Who are they defending that with? The Messenger of Allah saw. They are talking to the Messenger justifying shirk for days on end inside the house of Allah. Inside the house of Allah but there is not a frown on the Messenger SAW’s face. If anyone has the right to get angry for the sake of Islam it is Allah’s messenger SAW. And if there’s something to be offended about than it’s the statement that Allah has a son. And if there’s a group you should be really angry with, it’s the group that doesn’t just believe it, they’re the ones that preach it. They were the preachers from Najran. These were priests. These were the knowledgeable of them. Allah doesn’t just call them nasranioon. He calls them Ahl ul kitaab which also implies that they were people that were in contact with the books. They had access to the texts. They were literate people. They knew what they were talking about and they were still coming up with the wrong conclusion. So you have a right to get angry with them. Because the people who don’t know anything and they still make mistakes at least they can say I didn’t know. Not my fault I didn’t know. These guys knew and they still did. And yet, the attitude of our Messenger SAW towards them until Allah himself sent the word. Faman haajjata feehi. (Surah Aal e Imran, Ayah 61)And interestingly enough, He didn’t say jadala, he said Haajjata. Whoever tries to debate with you trying to stump you with argument. (“hujja” in Arabic, it’s when you are trying to disagree with someone going back and forth, it’s when you are trying to come up with something to stump your opponent, it’s like you are trying to come up with something to silence your opponent.)By using the word Haajja Allah is saying that these people are trying to one-up you in conversation. They are trying to out-do the Messenger of Allah SAW in conversation. Just think about this, in addition to that they’ve done shirk. In addition to the fact that they know what they are doing. In addition to all of that, they are trying to be offensive in their discourse with the Messenger of Allah saw. The same man, that if Muslims, not non- muslims, but Muslims, call him by the name Ya Mohammad, they just call him by his name. Some Bedouins came to the Messenger SAW and they called him by his name. They didn’t insult him. The Messenger’s name itself Mohammad SAW it’s a beautiful name. They didn’t say Ya Rasool Allah, they said Ya Mohammad. Just that. Allah is so angry at that insult that He says “Don’t call him what you call each other” don’t you do that. All your good deeds will be taken away. Just because you called him by his name. Just because of that. Coz you were too casual in your lack of respect for the Messenger of Allah SAW. And these guys are doing muhajjata with him. They are debating with him trying to outdo him with argument? How much more offended is Allah? First because they do shirk. Second, they are trying to debate in an offensive way with the Messenger of Allah. And at the end what does Allah say? He says call them with their kids and we will come with our kids and make dua to Allah and invoke the curse of Allah upon liars. But the Messenger SAW didn’t pass this verdict, Allah revealed this verdict. Allah revealed this verdict(repeat).

So be patient. This is teaching us something. We need to learn how to be patient. We need to learn how to take that anger and transform it into ancient intelligence. We respond to ignorance with intelligence. We cannot be impulsive people. We cannot let our anger get the best of us. Interestingly enough, I told you anger can be rooted in good things. We love our deen and when its attacked its gonna make us angry. I have a right as a husband and if I’m not given my right I have a right to get upset. I shouldn’t be treated this way, I shouldn’t be talked to this way. I have a right to be treated fairly at work. If my boss isn’t treating me fairly I have a right to be upset. Im not saying you don’t have that right. Im saying you do.

But if those feelings, if those feelings are stemming from something far worse than anger, You know what that is? It’s arrogance. Pride. Your pride is hurt. If that’s the case, than you’ve got way bigger problems than anger management. That’s not your real problem. When people command to do good and prohibit evil, im coming back to the ayah, wamur blimaroof wanha anil munkar wasbir ala maa asabak. Originally somebody commands to do good because they felt the good themselves when they got connected to Allah they wanted to people to change to good. But as you get used to commanding people to do good, you start forgetting about yourself. It’s just about you having the authority to tell people what to do. And when they don’t, you lose your patience. So it says wasbir ala maa asabak.

Wala tusa’irkhaddaka linnasi “Don’t swell your cheeks at people” which is the Arabic expression for what? Don’t get all high and holy against them. ‘These people, they do this. Those people ,huh, they are soo lost. They don’t even listen. They are so ignorant. They are so this. They are so that’. Don’t be condescending to people. Don’t be judgemental to people. This father is telling him, this anger, if you don’t have sabr you will become judgemental to people.

wala tamshi filardi “Don’t walk on earth with pride” when did pride come in this conversation? That same sentiment if sabr is not there it can go haywire.

Waqsid fi mashyik. Incredible. Have you seen someone who gets really angry? He starts walking around fast. They storm out. I can’t take this anymore. They slam their foot on the floor. They flip out. And it says there “walk sedately, keep your walk balanced” incredible that it’s placed there. Incredible that the ayah is placed there. Keep yourself in check buddy. Know who you are. Know your role. Walk slowly.

And what happens when a person gets angry? They raise their voice. That’s what they do. It says waghdud min sautik “keep your voice down” keep your voice low. There are many times you will get angry. Keep calm. You need to keep your voice low. Check yourself. And then he tells him if you do wanna raise your voice Inna ankaral aswaati lasautul hameer. Indeed the worst kind of sound is the sound made by a donkey. He compared an angry guy raising his voice to a donkey. And this is what I wanna end with. Why a donkey? First of all, it’s braying is very ugly. That’s why. I don’t wanna pretend to do it. You guys can do it yourself. But there’s another reason. A donkey was used classically in most societies to load stuff on to. Quran even describes loading books on to a donkey. Burdens and burdens of stuff piled on to a donkey until you put so much on it that it can’t take it anymore and starts making a nasty sound. You keep piling it on. In other words, you tested my patience, you tested my patience and you tested my patience until I had to go bray. Allah says don’t raise your voice. An animal, when it has reached its limit, then they can make noise. Human beings cannot make a noise. When you reach your limit, you need to learn that is the time you need to turn to Allah. That’s the time you connect back to Allah. You will not find any relief in releasing your anger. That’s not the healthy alternative

May Allah azza wa jal make us a people that can be patient with each other. May Allah azza wa jal make us a people that can. May Allah azza wa jal protect us from that evil deed of arrogance.

1. It sounds like Ya bunayya InnAllaha istifadukumuddiin fala tamutunna illa wa antum muslimoon but im not sure if this transliteration is correct and I do not want to misquote the Quran. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)