

[Home](#) > [Islamic Ethics](#) > [Lecture 10: Showing Anger with The Tongue, Hand or Heart](#) > Do Not Bear Oppression At The Beginning

Lecture 10: Showing Anger with The Tongue, Hand or Heart

Sometimes one can be excessive in anger at a time when one should be angry. This is not good, if it occurs. One should become angry at oppression and sin with his tongue, with his hand and with his heart, but should make sure to act in the correct fashion. How angry should one become? The different stages of anger using one's tongue hand or heart will become clear by giving some examples.

Exceeding the limits using the tongue – It is natural that a believer will become angry when someone says something bad to him. In this case, the best thing to do in the view of Islam is control one's anger and remain silent.

Answer Bad With Good

It would be very good if one could not only refrain from replying with bad language, but give the person advice in a nice tone using good manners. For example if one would tell him: “You are a respected person whom people look up to. It would be a shame if your respect would be lowered in their eyes.”

If a Muslim is able to answer bad language with good language, he should answer bad actions with good actions. For example, you can give someone who needs something what he needs even if that same person did not help you out when you were in need. If one is able to answer bad with good, his enemies would lose their hatred for him and would become his friends, even better than friends, they would become like family members.

Of course, not everyone is able to do this. Only the people who have a high level of faith are able to do this and benefit from their good habits.

The Other Person Will Be Ashamed When You Act Well With Them

At first it is difficult to answer with good words someone who swore at you, but later it becomes pleasurable to do so. Sometimes men, in order to feel better, answer one swear with ten different swears. Not only does this make that person feel worse, he gets even angrier and it results in making an enemy.

A person who answers bad language with good language, who controls his anger, who acts like an adult, is the one who will become calm and feel better while the person who used bad language will be ashamed and regretful.

An Eye For An Eye Limited By The Divine Decree

One can perform one of the following three actions to someone who swears at him. He can either forgive him and remain silent or answer his bad language with good language, or if he cannot do any of these he can swear at the person just like the latter swore at him. For example if someone called him stupid he can reply: "You're the stupid one." But, he does not have the right to say anything against his father, mother or brother.

The Qur n says: “***..Should anyone aggress against you, assail him in the manner he assailed you.***”¹ One is unable to oppress the oppressor to a higher degree of oppression than he was oppressed himself. If one swears twice responding to one swear, he has crossed the limits.

There is no eye for an eye regarding false accusations. The accused cannot claim that the accuser committed the crime that he says was committed. For example, the accused cannot accuse the accuser of committing adultery in return for a false accusation. What the accused can do is charge the accuser of making false accusations and if it is confirmed he will be punished Islamically.²

The danger here is one losing control of one's tongue in the state of anger and saying more than one is allowed to say which results in becoming divinely responsible.

But, in any case, one may respond with bad language, if it is not a false accusation, lie or slander and not outside the limits. One's tongue easily goes out of control and the only thing there is to control it is the fear of Allah.

Dignity And Comfort In Front Of Tribalism

Here we will mention a verse from Surah al-Fath: “When the faithless nourished bigotry in their hearts, the bigotry of pagan ignorance, Allah sent down His composure upon the Apostle and upon the faithful, and made them abide by the word of God-wariness, for they were the worthiest of it and deserved it,

and Allah has knowledge of all things”.[3](#)

The Arabs in the age of Ignorance, in addition to having satanic and animalistic anger, were more racist and more tribalistic than other nations. According to a prophetic tradition, tribalism was the cause of their fall. Their tribalism made them arrogant, and because of it they continued to accept the false slogans that their fellow tribesmen would say.

The unbelievers had this spirit of ignorant tribalism while Allah gave his Prophet and those who followed him peace and comfort so that they had dignity in front of the unbelievers.

The Peace Treaty Of Hudaibiyah

This verse was revealed about the peace treaty of Hudaibiyah which has been mentioned in Islamic history and is outside of our discussion. The polytheists sent Suhayl bin 'Amr to the Prophet (S) as their representative in writing the treaty. The Messenger of Allah (S) recited the peace treaty and the Commander of the faithful (a) wrote it down. The Prophet said: “Write 'In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful'.” The Commander of the faithful wrote it.

Suhayl said: “We do not know the Compassionate, the Merciful. Nothing has reached us about this from our ancestors.” Some Muslims complained and said that the sentence must remain as it was.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said: “What should we write?”

Suhayl said: “Writing: ‘in your name, O Allah’, is common amongst us.”

The Prophet said; “‘Alī, erase what you wrote and write: ‘in your name, O Allah’.”

This is not something so serious that one should fight over and ruin the peace treaty which is in the benefit of Islam and the Muslims. What loss will those words cause? The principle is that it should be started in the name of Allah; it does not matter with which sentence. Those people had a satanic form of tribalism in their hearts and for that reason Allah gave the Muslims peace in their hearts to bear what he said.

In Any Case, Muhammad (S) Is A Prophet

The Prophet (S) then said: “Write: ‘This document is between Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, and Suhayl bin 'Amr.’”

When it was written, Suhayl said: “We would not have fought you if we thought that you were a prophet sent from Allah.”

The companions got angry and a fight was about to break out when the Prophet (S) said: “No problem, erase it.”

'Alī (a) asked: "O Messenger of Allah (S)! How can I erase your title?"

The Prophet took the document and erased the words 'the Messenger of Allah' himself.

Muhammad is a Prophet whether they write it or not. Is writing that Muhammad was the messenger of Allah worth fighting over? Is it worth destroying the peace treaty over?

Do Not Lose Your Calm

A believer is one whose soul and veins are full of piety. A believer always considers Allah to be present and watching everything. His tongue and eyes are in his control and he does not become angry because of his *nafs*. If he becomes angry it is for Allah.

Suhayl bin 'Amr disrespected the Prophet (S) and the Prophet refrained from getting angry. This is the *sunna* of the Prophet (S). One must not lose his calm. One should remain pious. One should not show satanic and animalistic anger at ignorance. One must show dignity and calmness when dealing with ignorant, tribalistic people. The Qurʾān describes the believers as having the following characteristic: "...When ignorant people address them they say peace (*salām*)."⁴ The Arabic term *salām* is derived from *salama*. It means that we do not have any fight with you. We are not like you ignorant people who use such bad language with someone. A Muslim is one with whom other Muslims feel safe.⁵

Stepping Over The Limits Of Anger

According to the Qurʾān it is better to forgive someone who slaps you.⁶ One should not say that if I forgive him, he will slap another person. It is usual for a criminal to feel upset and ask for repentance when the victim forgives him. It is better to fight one's *nafs* and forgive that person rather than seeking revenge. The reason for this is that the revenge must equal the harm that was inflicted and doing that is very difficult. For this reason, forgiving the person is closer to piety than seeking revenge.

Do Not Bear Oppression At The Beginning

We should also remember the verse of Qurʾān that says: "***Do not commit oppression nor be oppressed.***"⁷ This is regarding oppression at the first stage. For example, nobody said let a person who wants to hit you, hit you. Likewise, nobody said to let someone who wants to kill you, kill you. The Commander of the faithful (a) said that someone who does this is like someone who commits suicide.⁸ The reason for this is because he did not defend himself even though he was able to prevent the other person from killing him.

They say that it is better to forgive someone rather than seeking revenge after he has hit you. There is a pleasure that is in forgiving that is not found in revenge.

The following has been mentioned in the explanation of the verse that says forgiving is closer to piety: there are three things that one can do after being wounded. The first is forgiving the criminal, the second is asking for blood money and the third is physically punishing him. This verdict must be given by the Islamic judge (*ḥakīm al-sharīʿ*). The punishment cannot be any bigger than the wound itself. For example, Qanbar, Imām ‘Alī’s (a) servant was whipping someone as an Islamic punishment. He accidentally whipped the person one extra time and the Imām said that Qanbar must be whipped one time by the person who was whipped.

It is better to forgive the person because punishing someone equally is difficult. In any case, the best thing to do is forgive the person and the second best thing to do is ask for blood money. But, if someone wants to physically punish the criminal, he must do so equally.

So, you are not allowed to slap someone twice who slapped you once. Also, you cannot hit someone who struck you and left a red mark, in such a way so as to leave a black mark. If one does this he must pay the extra amount in blood money.

[1.](#) 2:194

[2.](#) One can refer to the book “Greater Sins” for more explanation.

[3.](#) 48:26.

[4.](#) 25:63.

[5.](#) Shaykh Kulaynī, *Usūl al-Kḥf*, volume 2, page 234.

[6.](#) Refer to 2:237.

[7.](#) 2:279

[8.](#) Shaykh ‘Alī Namāzī, *Mustadrak Safīnat al-Bihar*, volume 2, page 407.

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