ANGER
How Do You Pardes?

PARDES was originally conceived as a home based, synagogue sponsored, adult education program. It's applications have exceeded our expectations. PARDES groups are found in high school classrooms, university campuses, homes, synagogues, JCC's, military bases, prisons, outreach and senior citizen centers.

We would like to know how you are using the material.

Please take a moment to call us, toll free, and tell us how do you Pardes?
Introduction

"The world needs anger. The world often continues to allow evil because it isn't angry enough." - Budge Jarrett

I believe that I am allergic to anger. I cringe whenever I see someone lose his or her temper. I hate to see a parent yell at a child or a boss admonish his or her workers. My revulsion is immediate, and I have always considered my revulsion to be a good trait. There are many quotes from the Torah and the Talmud condemning anger. Likewise, when I occasionally hear someone praise their parents, "My mom never got angry at us," my response is "Wow! What a great human being!"

Recently, however, I have begun to wonder. Anger is a normal reaction, as natural and honest as sympathy or fear. Though it may be ugly to see someone lose their temper, perhaps those of us who avoid getting angry are really engaged in a subtle form of escapism. If I train myself to stay calm in the face of oppression, am I not stifling my own humanity? If I fail to protest evil, if I let my children pursue the path of least resistance, if I decline to admonish inefficient employees, am I not contributing to the decay of society? Have I stifled my own conscience?

An often quoted Talmudic statement provides: "When a person gets angry, it is as if he is worshipping an idol." The trouble is, however, that this passage does not exist. What the Talmud does say is: "He who rips his clothing or throws something in his anger, it is as if he worships idols." The Talmud teaches us the not so subtle distinction between the person who gets angry and the person who loses himself in his anger; while it is never correct to lose control, controlled anger may have its place.

This brings us to our current Pardes issue. When we get angry, are we displaying strength or weakness? Sensitivity or callousness? And when we deflect our anger, are we reacting maturely or out of cold-heartedness and indifference? The answer is crucial. The future of our society is at stake.

Note: As in all Pardes issues, many of the sources compiled were written many centuries ago and therefore reflect the thinking and culture of their times. However the concepts are eternal.

Rabbi Yaacov Haber
How would you respond?

1. You have spent years working on controlling your temper with your children. One afternoon after school, you overhear your young children and their friends talking. One of the other kids describes to everyone the practical jokes that he has pulled on his teacher, and the calls that his parents have received from the school. When your son asks how the child can continue such behavior, the child responds that while his parents may urge him to stop, he knows that they never get angry when the teacher calls to complain so they can't be that upset. You wonder, whether it is better to refrain from anger altogether, or to get angry in order to impress your children into doing the right thing?

2. Your friend is a virtual cannonball of anger. He rails against those causing world hunger, derides those who fail to help the disabled, and derides those who are stupid. He attends protest rallies, signs petitions and writes angry letters to the editor. You gingerly suggest that all of his anger is unhealthy and could give him a coronary. He responds that you are uncaring, and that, in any event, you are the one whose pent-up emotions are likely to result in an ulcer.

3. You are about to get engaged. You go to pick-up your fiancé from his class and see him in a heated argument with someone about the veracity of religion. He is very angry and seems to have lost his temper. Your intuitive response is that you don't want to marry a man who appears to lack the proper virtues. On further reflection, you find your fiancé's anger to be noble because he is defending a principle to which he is strongly committed.

4. After standing in queue for over forty-five minutes, you are finally close to the head of the line. You notice someone trying to cut into a line next to yours, but the interloper retreats when confronted with the anger of those in that line. The interloper starts moving in front of you. Rather than getting angry, you calmly, but firmly, insist that the person leave immediately. The person snickers in response and ignores your protestations. For hours thereafter you feel like a wimp.
Discussion Points

A butcher once became enraged at Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin for declaring his meat unkosher. In his anger, the butcher devised a scheme to murder the rabbi. On a pretext, the butcher bad the rabbi travel with him on a lonely road. Along the way, the butcher took out his sharp knife, and made a motion to kill the rabbi.

At first, the rabbi pleaded with the butcher to have compassion, but the rabbi's pleas were to no avail. When the rabbi saw that nothing he could say would make a difference, he started to focus mentally on all the positive qualities and attributes of the butcher. Suddenly, there was an amazing transformation. While the rabbi was thinking about the butcher's virtues, the butcher changed his mind. With a strong feeling of love and tears in his eyes, the butcher kissed the rabbi and begged his forgiveness.

Mayanot HaChalm 3:19

1. It is permissible for a person to become angry in order to instill fear in others. R. Yehuda would tear his clothing to show that he was angry, that they should fear him. Rav Acha bar Yaakov would break dishes. Rav Sheshes poured a pot of small fish on his maidservant's head. Rabbi Abba broke the lid of a jug.

Shabbos 105b Source, p. 17

Yet

2. When someone throws an object in anger, an angel by the name of Sepserita catches the item, takes it to the Heavens and says this is the person's sacrifice to the dark side.

Zohar Pikudei 283 Source, p. 17

Negative Anger

3. It is forbidden to gaze at the face of an angry person.

Zohar Tazavvek 182 Source, p. 18

4. When a person gets angry, he loses his faith in G-d. If he really believed that everything was from G-d, he wouldn't get angry at all.


5. A person who has a naturally cold personality, or lacks a tendency toward anger, has not reached the level of a person who has a natural tendency to become angry, but gains control over his temper.

Sefer HaMaspik l'Avoel Hashem, R. Avraham ben HaRambam

6. There is a very powerful tool that will enable you to overcome many potential quarrels: humility. By speaking from a humble position, you will often be able to soften even a heart made of stone. Your adversary's heart will melt in the face of your warmth. The person who acts submissively loses absolutely nothing. Outwardly, you comply with the wishes of the other person, but inwardly, you and your spiritual level are not affected.

Maayanai HaChalm, vol. 3, pp. 64-65, R. Chaim Zaltchayk

7. A person who constantly works on himself and has reached a proper level of love for other people, will not feel hurt or angered by what others say to him. He will be meticulously careful to show respect to everyone, while realizing that the majority of people have not perfected their character traits, so he does not have excessive expectations of others.

Chazon Ish, Emunah u'Betachon 11:11, 15 Source, p. 20 Biography p.13

8. The prohibition against anger does not refer to a person who gets angry for no reason; only fools do that. It refers to a person who becomes angry for good reason.

R. Avraham ben HaRambam, Sefer HaMaspik, p. 43

9. Anger and pride go together. Usually anger is the result of an arrogant heart.

Ibid. p.44

10. A person becomes angry only when he knows in the depth of his heart that he is wrong, and uses his anger to cover his mistake.

11 Rav Ashi said, "A Torah scholar who is not as tough as steel isn't a real scholar. Ravina said, "Nonetheless, a person should teach himself to act gently."
Ta'anis 4a Source, p. 21

12 "How did you merit to live such a long life?", the students asked R. Zeira. "I never became angry within my house," he replied.
Megillah 28a Source, p. 21

12a Even when he occasionally had to become angry for the sake of heaven, so that people should listen to him and change their ways, in his innermost parts, "within his house," he was not really angry with them at all.
Be'er Mayim Chaim, Kl Tisa

13 Reo Simcha Zissel of Kelm used to put on a special coat before he would show anger in order to remember this principle.
Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur LI; pg 223

14 All the aggression in the world comes from the energy in people that they have not yet used to serve G-d.
R. Nachman of Breslov, Likutey Moharan 1:75 Biography, p. 13

15 If I were to allow myself to get angry, I would get very angry. Therefore, I don't let myself get angry at all.
R. Nachman of Breslov Biography, p. 13

16 A person should never terrorize his household. If he does, he will ultimately transgress three major sins: forbidden relations, murder, and Shabbos desecration. There may be a time when the mikvah water is too cold for his wife to immerse, but she will be too afraid of him to tell him. She may run away from him out of fear, and fall in a ditch and die. She may cook or light candles after Shabbos has begun, because she is too afraid to tell him things were not ready before shabbos.
Gitin 6b according to Rashi Source, p. 21

17 When a wise person gets angry he loses his wisdom, a prophet loses his prophecy. Even if a person is destined for greatness by heaven, if he gets angry, the decree is torn up.
Pesachim 66b Source, p. 22

18 Cursed be their anger (Shimon and Levi) for it is intense, and their wrath because it is harsh; I will separate them within Jacob and I will disperse them in Israel.
Genesis 49; 7

18a Shimon and Levi had too much anger. G-d will therefore take their anger and dilute it by spreading it out amongst all the tribes of Israel.
Ari z"l Likutei Torah Vayechi Source, p. 23

Positive Anger

19 The students of the Chofetz Chaim would look forward to his becoming angry for then he would reveal profound and wondrous teachings that they would otherwise never hear.
Alei Shur LI; pg 223

20 When a young scholar gets angry, it is not him that is angry, but the Torah that is burning within him
Taanis 4a Source, p. 23

20a Because of his deep relationship with the Torah he takes things to heart more than other people do.
Rashi ibid.

20b The Torah is like fire and therefore changes the nature of the student to a fiery one. Nevertheless, even a scholar must learn to control this dangerous character trait.
Maharsha ibid. Source, p. 24 Biography, p. 15

21 Increasing wisdom increases anger
Ecclesiastes 1:18
22 When a wise-hearted person looks at the world and sees how foolishly people are acting, and that they are destroying the world, he wants to fix the world according to his understanding. When he sees that he cannot, he becomes furious.

*Rabbenu Hayyim, R. Zev Wolf Einhorn, on Koheles Rabbah 1*

*Source*, p. 24

23 It's an obligation for a Torah scholar to get angry to defend his honor, and all the more so, the honor of the Torah.

*Chidushei HaGeonim on Ta'anis 4a*

24 Anger for the sake of the Torah arises when a person of high spiritual sensibility, who soars in the realm of higher contemplation, must suddenly confront reality, which remains in its lowly state in the practical world, because most of life is on a low level of development. The soul that yearns for the delight of G-d and for the splendor of the divine light, in its great brightness, is.grieved and is agitated, and develops the semblance of a pent-up anger.

*R. A.Y. Kook, Midos HaRayah, Anger: Biography*, p. 12

25 Although anger is an extremely evil trait, there are times when a person must make use of it, such as when it is necessary to castigate the wicked, or to instill awe in his children, or to bring respect upon his students.

*Orchos Tzaddikim, the Gate of Anger*, *Source*, p. 24

26 "Be not easily angered."

*Pirkei Avos 2:10*

26a If you find any excuse to dismiss anger, dismiss it. Then, when there is reason to be genuinely angry, your anger will not fail you. Under the correct circumstances, one may not withhold anger even if it will do damage.

*Rabbeinu Yonah ibid.* *Source*, p. 24

27 If a person is angry with his friend, it is better for him to express it, than to conceal it in his heart and hate him. Better to be angry, than to put on a happy face. When you show him that you are angry, you may find that your friend isn't guilty of what you thought, and by talking the matter over, you will remove the hatred between you and make both your hearts glad.

*Shaas Chaim quoted in Me'am Loez, on Ecclesiastes 7:3*

28 A person should not be easy to anger, but he should also not be as unfeeling as a corpse. Rather, he should seek the middle path. He should become angry only over important things, in order that people should not repeat their mistakes in the future.

*Rambam, Mishna Torah, Hilchos Deos 1:4*

*Source*, p. 24 *Biography*, p. 16

But...

29 Anger is an extremely bad trait that a person should distance himself from as much as possible. He should teach himself not to get angry, even if the situation warrants it. If a father wants to instill awe in his family, or a leader in his community, to help them improve their ways, he should merely act as though he is angry. He should only pretend.

Ibid. 2:3
Biographies

Rabbi Abraham Yitzchak Kook (1865–1935)

The first chief rabbi of what was then Palestine, Rabbi Kook was perhaps the most misunderstood figure of his time.

Born in Latvia of staunch Hasidic and Mitnagdic stock, he retained throughout his life a unique blend of the mystical and the rational. He was a thorough master of the entire Halachic, Midrashic, philosophic, ethical, and Kabbalistic literature. But more important, he brought to bear the entire tradition upon the contemporary scene. He saw the return to Eretz Yisrael as not merely a political phenomenon to save Jews from persecution, but an event of extraordinary historical and theological significance. Rabbi Hutner once said that Rav Kook peered down on our world from great heights and hence his perspective was unique.

Above all, Rav Kook pulsed with a sense of the Divine. And, he sought to reach those who had strayed. He once quoted the rabbinic dictum that one should embrace with the right hand and rebuff with the left and commented that he was fully capable of rejecting, but since there were enough rejecters, he was fulfilling the role of embracer. On the other hand, he was never tolerant of desecration of Torah, as will be clear to any objective student of his life and works.

Though keenly aware of the huge numbers of non-observant Jews, he had a vision of the repentance of the nation. His concept of repentance envisioned in addition to the repentance of the individual, a repentance of the nation as a whole; a repentance which would be joyous and healing. He refused to reject Jews as long as they identified themselves as Jews. In a noteworthy exchange with his great friend, admirer, and opponent, Rabbi Yaakov David Willowski, Rav Kook explained the two components of a Jew: his essential nature — the pintele yid, and the path he had chosen in exercising free will. Even if the second element were weak, as long as the first was not repudiated, there was still hope.

He called for and envisioned a spiritual renaissance where “the ancient would be renewed and the new would be sanctified.” His vision of repentance dispelled fear and apprehension and looked forward to “the poet of Yeshua, who would be the poet of life, the poet of renewal and the poet of the national soul waiting to be redeemed.”

Perhaps he was that poet.

Rav Kook’s printed works to date are in excess of 30 volumes with many works still in manuscript. There are a number of translations into English of a small fraction of his works. M.G.

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (1772–1810)

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov was one of the most creative, influential and profound of the Chassidic masters. A great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, he was recognized as a tzaddik while still a young man. From his youth, he followed a path of asceticism and prayer, though he warned his followers not to abuse themselves physically. He was a passionate individual, given to intense swings of emotions. These he put toward the service of G-d, and spoke often of how to find G-d even in the low states of mind, and how to serve Him during the emotional highs. Central to his teachings is the role of the tzaddik, who has the power to descend into the darkness to redeem lost souls; the path of prayer as the main expression of religious life. His main work is Likutey Moharan, composed partly by himself, partly by his chief disciple, Rabbi Nosson Sternhartz. The book is a collection of sermons delivered by Rabbi Nachman, given mostly on the holidays when his Chassidim gathered. The lessons are long and complex, masterfully drawing on the entire body of Talmud, Midrashic and Kabbalistic literature. Ideas are connected by a poetic and intuitive grasp of the texts. In addition, Rabbi Nachman wrote thirteen “Tales” — mythical stories of kings and wizards based upon Kabbalistic thought and capturing the essence of Rabbi Nachman’s teachings. These tales were known to have influenced later authors such as Franz Kafka. Rabbi Nachman died of Tuberculosis at the age of 38. Despite the fact that there was never another “Breslov Rebbe” to fill his place, the mystery and depth of his teachings continue to attract students today, and Breslover Chassidism is one of the largest and most vibrant of Chassidic groups. E.S.

Rabbi Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz (1875–1963)

The “Chazon Ish” devoted his life to the study of Torah, although he also learned sciences such as astronomy, anatomy, and mathematics, since he felt that a knowledge of these subjects was necessary for a full understanding of Jewish law and practice. In Vilna in 1911, Rav Karelitz began publishing the work for which he is best known, the “Chazon Ish.” In 1933, he moved to Eretz Yisrael where he held no official positions yet he became known as a worldwide authority on all matters relating to Jewish law and life. He considered man's duty in life to be the constant study of Jewish law, aiming at the attainment of a maximum degree of perfection in religious observance. M.G.
Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1891–1954)

Rabbi Dessler was born into a family steeped in the musar movement founded by Rabbi Israel Saltzer and he remained a musar personality for his entire life. However, his thought went considerably beyond the ordinary concerns of other musar thinkers and he integrated other systems and confronted different problems as well.

Most of Rabbi Dessler’s education took place at the Kelm Talmud Torah where his father had been an outstanding disciple of R. Simcha Zissel. The family resided in Homel where Eliyahu had the opportunity to meet outstanding Chabad thinkers. In 1929, he became a rabbi in London and in 1941 accepted the directorship of the Gateshead kollel. Over the years, he became familiar with Kabbalistic and Hasidic thoughts, particularly the thought of Rabbi Zadok HaCohen and the Tanya.

His essays and letters have been collected in four volumes (several volumes under the title Strive for Truth have been edited and translated into English by Rabbi Aryeh Carmel). His topics include perennial questions such as free will and faith as well as contemporary problems in education, evolution and how to respond to the Holocaust.

His personal character and modesty complemented and affirmed his thought. On the last Sukkot of his life he visited the succah of the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish, upon seeing Rabbi Dessler, rose and rushed toward him. Not imagining that he was coming toward him, Rabbi Dessler turned to the door to see who the distinguished guest was that the Chazon Ish was so honoring. M.G.

Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Edels (MaHarSha) (1555–1631)

R. Shmuel wrote one of the most incisive and keenly analytical commentaries on the Talmud, Rashi and Tosafot. A model of logic and terseness it was quickly accepted and was printed in almost all editions of the Talmud. If one grasps the MaHarSha he has understood the Tosafot. R. Shmuel also wrote an extensive commentary on the aggadot of the Talmud which reflects his wide knowledge of philosophy and Kabbalah.

From the 16th to the 18th century Jewish autonomy reached its zenith in the Council of the Four Lands, through which the Jewish provinces were administered. The Council met twice a year at the Lublin and Yaroslav fairs. One of the greatest authorities of his day, the MaHarSha was an outstanding figure at the meetings of the Council. While away at the fairs he was absent from the Yeshiva when certain pages of the Talmud were studied. Because he could not benefit from the usual give and take when those pages were being studied, he refrained from printing his commentary on those pages. (See his remark at the end of the Seventh chapter of Shabbos and the Sixth chapter of Sanhedrin.)

For twenty years MaHarSha directed the Yeshiva in Posen. During this time all the expenses of the Yeshiva were assumed by his mother-in-law, Edel. In appreciation of her support he adopted her name. After her death he served as rabbi in the following prominent communities: Chelm, Lublin and Ostrog. His commentary on Aggadot contains numerous references to the conditions and problems of his time. It also includes his sharp critique of contemporary failings such as wealth being a prerequisite to attaining positions in the community.

In his will, R. Yonah Landsofer admonishes his sons to be sure to carefully study Tosafot with the MaHarSha, as his commentary is true and profound and “the spirit of G-d spoke through him for without the holy spirit it would have been impossible to compose such a work”.

The Chazon Ish had this to say about study of the MaHarSha: “I cannot refrain from pointing out that our generation has not done well in forsaking study of the MaHarSha which is a wonderful gift granted to Israel...to train them in laboring in Torah...which converts matter to spirit and body to soul...This holy book is full of profound ideas and trains a person in correct analysis. The Goan R. Akiva Eger did not neglect any part of this work. From the day that this book was neglected the understanding of Pahat was lost and students became accustomed to facile analysis...”

On the door post of R. Shmuel’s house were inscribed the words, “No sojourner spent the night outside, my door was always open to the guest”. (Job 31:32) M.G.
Rav Moshe Ben Maimon (The Rambam) (1135–1204)

Moses Maimonides is known as the greatest Jewish philosopher and codifier of Jewish law in history. Born in Cordoba, Spain, he was forced to flee from fanatical Moslems at the age of thirteen, where he traveled with his family to North Africa, and ten years later to Palestine. As a result of the devastation left by the Crusaders, Palestine was virtually uninhabitable, forcing the family to move to Fostat (current day Cairo). Throughout these journeys, the young Maimonides had concentrated on Torah studies under the guidance of his father, and by the time he reached Fostat had become a famous scholar. Supported by his merchant brother, the Rambam was able to write copiously, gaining international acclaim in both Jewish and secular fields of knowledge. After the tragic death of his brother, the responsibility of supporting his family fell on the Rambam's shoulders, and through his fame he was appointed chief physician of the Sultan. Despite the immense workload that was required, not only with his responsibilities to the royal family, but to the entire Egyptian community as the official Nagid (royally appointed leader), and to the halachic questions of world Jewry as a response, the Rambam was remarkably able to complete some of his greatest Jewish works, including his philosophical work The Guide for the Perplexed and his magnum opus the Mishna Torah - the great codification of all Jewish law. While he was considered an undisputed leader of world Jewry at the time, there was bitter opposition to much of his works because they incorporated much of Aristotelian philosophy that went against the traditional purist ideology of much of Ashkenazi Jewry, and others believed his codifications would make much of the role of the rabbi and the oral tradition obsolete. A.B.

Reb Shneur Zalman (1745–1813)

Reb Shneur Zalman was the founder of Chabad Chassidas, and learned about Hasidism from Rabbi Dov Baer HaMaggid, leader of the Hasidic movement. Under The Maggid, Reb Shneur Zalman wrote updated and profound commentaries about the Shulchan Aruch. When the anti-Chassidic movement was taking place in the mid-18th century, Reb Shneur Zalman went to Vilna and attempted to speak to the Gaon of Vilna to try to reach some kind of understanding between Chassidim and Misnagdim. Reb Shneur Zalman later published the Tanya, which was accepted as the written law of Chabad Chassidus. His ability to explain even the most complex issues of Torah made his writings popular with Torah scholars everywhere. Reb Zalman had a vast knowledge of mathematics and science as well. His son, Rabbi Shalom Dov Baer Schneerson, became the leader of the Chassidic movement after Reb Zalman's death.

Sources

1. Shabbos 105b

2. Zohar Pikudei 283
3.

Zohar Tezaveh 182

4.

R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, Tanya, Igores HaKodesh 25 In the name of the Baal Shem Tov

יכא לא כלפי זמן, לאṕ יבוא, שאר כבסק מיתר כבסק. כבסק שמט באס. לא יבוא. שאר כבסק מיתר כבסק. כבסק שמט באס. לא יבוא.

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7.
Chazon Ish, Emunah u'Betachon 1:11, 15

8.
R. Elyahu Dessler, Michtav MeElyahu, vol. 1, p. 168

11.
Ta'anis 4a

12.
Megillah 28a

16.
Gitton 5b according to Rashi

*שמירת התורה היא 어 오해 Durch die Unterscheidung der ehemaligen und der heutigen

PARDES PROJECT
17.
Pesachim 66b

18a.
Ari 257 Likutei Torah YasehSh

מדת הכותס - המשלמה את האדומים

א. המקבל מבלה בכותס בלא מצוה

אמר רבי יהודה דלא

ודא עמהות כל בול מברשים כ�もない בכהה. גו

תייהור. כותס חדש אומן את רבים לה נותנו בלא בורה. וביא

אוסר קביעות שנחתהдесят לבל всем כותפיים וכותנים

והנה לለחל: "למי שיאמר על שלחן אדום שמקצתו בכות

יונדיעים. אם לא יהיה רם צעיף - בר לשלים את השמות.

וכן אמרו חייל:

והם בהלכות!}

אלא אם כן: סוף של ארבעה ימים שארית

וכו. ד. בהנים: לא מועדים שיר תשיב בראה (ואל אומד לאויה). ואלא שיאמרו: הנה אין מсудים

כפי הוהים. ".AddTransient - תומך", " pieniądze חור על הכותס והכותアクセס

עכש.

20.
Taanis 4a

אמר רבי ירא סופרה

פרבר רוחה אופירה וואד אופירה

ל deux מבסטר "כח" בחר את "מה" על זה.
20b.
Maharsha ibid.

22.
Poeirusch HaMaharzal, R. Zev Wolf Einhorn, on Koheles Rabbah 1

25.
Orchos Tzadikim, the Gate of Anger

26a.
Rabbeinu Yonah ibid.

28.
Rambam, Mishna Torah, Hilchos Deos 1:4