Controlling Anger… Before It Controls You

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**Pirkei Avos 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.*

**#1**

**Question:** What do you stand to lose from the trait of anger?

**#2**

**Kohelet 7:9**

*Be not hasty in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the laps of fools.*

**Question:** Is it true that only foolish people get angry?

What is the meaning of this verse?

**#3**

**Question:** Think of a time that made you angry.

Where did it come from?

What made you angry?

**#4**

**Talmud Shabbat 30b, 31a**

*A person should always be humble like Hillel…*:

*It once happened that two men were talking with each other and made a deal, “Whoever goes and angers Hillel shall receive four hundred zuz.” One of them said, “I will go and anger him today.”*

*It was Erev Shabbat (Friday, close to the start of Shabbat), and Hillel was washing his hair. The man went past the door of Hillel’s house, and called out, “Who here is Hillel, who here is Hillel?”*

*Hillel wrapped himself up and went out to him, saying, “My son, what do you want?”*

*“I have a question to ask,” he said.*

*“Ask, my son.”*

*Thereupon he asked, “Why are the heads of the Babylonians so round?”*

*“My son, you have asked an important question,” he replied. “Because they do not have skillful midwives.”*

*[The man came back twice screaming “Who here is Hillel, who here is Hillel?” with similar insane questions, and each time Hillel answered patiently. Finally, the man said:]*

*“I have many questions to ask, but fear that you may get angry.”*

*Hillel tightened his robe, sat before him, and said, “Ask all the questions you have to ask.”*

*“Are you the Hillel who is called the Leader of Israel?”*

*“Yes,” Hillel replied.*

*“If that is you,” he retorted, “may there not be many like you in Israel.”*

*He said, “Why is that, my son?”*

*“Because I have lost four hundred zuz through you!”*

*Hillel said to him: Be vigilant of your spirit and avoid situations of this sort. Hillel is worthy of having you lose four hundred zuz and another four hundred zuz on his account, and Hillel will not get upset.*

**Questions:** What exactly was the man doing to make Hillel angry?

What was his strategy?

The Talmud should have concluded from Hillel's behavior that man should work on his temper, anger or something similar. Then why does the Gemara start the story by saying, “*A person should always be humble like Hillel…*?

**#5**

**Talmud Shabbat 105b**

*A person who tears his clothes in anger, or breaks his possessions, or scatters his money in rage, is considered as though he worships idols …*

**Question:** What is the possible connection between anger and idolatry?



**#6**

**CASE**

You stand on the street when suddenly you feel a strong kick in the knee. What's your reaction when you turn around and see that it was:

a) an adolescent troublemaker,

b) a mentally disabled man who likes to push people,

c) a 1-year old boy.

**Question:** Is your reaction different in a), b), c)? Why?

**#7 Question:** How does a person overcome anger?

**#8 BONUS**

**Eiruvin 65b**

*You can recognize a person’s true nature by three things: his cup (alcoholic drink), his pocket (money), and his anger.*

Explain!

**#9 Question:**

What’s one thing you learned today that you can apply in your life?

