

# Haman's Anger Management

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Of all the abilities that human beings possess, perhaps none is as mysterious as our talent for compartmentalization. Each of us is multiple people, and different ones emerge in different circumstances and relationships.

If we can never fully know somebody, it's not simply because his exterior does not match his interior. It's because we have so many chambers inside, and some are more hidden than others, even from the person himself. As the radio program of yesteryear called "The Shadow" stated, "Who knows what evil lurks in the heart of man?"

Thus, even mild mannered people, including me, lose their temper and get angry on occasion. Is there a magic formula to control and manage our anger?

Last week the OU Israel Center showed the film Ground-Hog Day. It's about a guy that is stuck in a Time Warp. This person keeps re-living the SAME day over and over again. He keeps repeating the same mistakes of the past.

I can identify with the Bill Murray character in the film. When I am having a Bad Hair Day, I tell myself, "I

won't become upset and angry." And then, BOOM - It's Ground-Hog Day all over again!

The Talmud in Shabbat 105 and Nedarim 22 state, "When one becomes angry, it is as if he is serving idols." This seems to be a very extreme and exaggerated statement. How can the Talmud compare anger to the worst sin of idolatry?

Upon deep reflection, we can perceive a connection. What really causes anger? When things don't go my way, when my plans don't work out, I get angry. The world is not conforming to my vision of perfection.

However, since G-D is running and controlling all events, getting angry is like saying that my version of the world is better than His! A person in the heat of anger thinks, "If I were running the world, I wouldn't have all these problems and troubles." The angry person also thinks, "If I was in charge of the world, I wouldn't be messing things up the way G-D is." This angry reaction is a subtle form of idol worship. Because I am enthroning my intellect and ego and paying homage to them, instead of to G-d.

What is the best antidote for anger?

Purim is coming fast. Perhaps the antidote for anger can be found in the Megillah. "That day Haman went out (from the King) joyfully and exuberant. But when he noticed Mordechai in the King's gate, that



Mordechai did not stand up and did not bow before him, Haman was filled with anger and rage at Mordechai. Yet Haman controlled and restrained himself and went home. He summoned his friends and his wife Zeresh." (Esther 5)

Why did Haman restrain his fury? How could he have suppressed and controlled his anger? Rashi explains, because Haman was afraid to take revenge against Mordechai without explicit permission from the King.

Here was the wicked and evil Haman "filled with rage". His whole being was fury and anger, with murderous intent. Yet he was able to control and restrain himself from acting impulsively because he considered its negative consequences. How much more so should we be able to control OUR angry impulses!

The Mishna in Avot 2 states, "Know Who and What is above you! An All Seeing Eye, an attentive and All Listening Ear, and all your deeds are recorded in The Book."

When you feel anger coming, stop and say, "Smile, you're on Candid Camera!"

