

Anger as a Foundational Contributor to Diseases and Dysfunctions

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Abstract: Anger is a universal human impulse rooted in innate temperament and present from early life. While it can serve legitimate protective and moral functions, unregulated anger frequently produces psychological dysregulation, social rupture, and long-lasting harm. Classical Islamic Talim describe anger as a force that can blur the boundary between reason and irrationality, warning that it begins in a state akin to madness and culminates in shame and regret. Nabawi guidance and the Hidayah of Amir al-Mumineen Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as) and Al Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) emphasize that anger corrodes faith, facilitates sin, and becomes a gateway to wrongdoing when indulged. Physiologically, anger manifests through visible bodily signs-facial flushing, trembling limbs, sweating-and is associated with elevated heart rate and increased risk of hypertension, stroke, and cardiac events. The harms extend beyond the individual to the family and society by amplifying hostility, damaging reputation, and eroding relational trust. Yet anger is not framed as wholly condemnable: it may be justified when directed toward the defense of faith and justice, the establishment of good - Ma'ruf and prevention of evil - Munkar, protection of dignity and property, and resistance to tyranny-provided it remains disciplined and ethically bounded. This paper further considers the developmental dimension of anger, arguing that habitual anger may be cultivated or moderated by early parental conduct. Harsh restrictions, insults, and coercive control can weaken self-confidence and provoke maladaptive rebellion, whereas calm investigation of triggers (fatigue, hunger, discomfort) and compassionate communication reduce escalation. The "nails in the fence" parable illustrates the permanence of verbal injury and the ethical duty to restrain speech in rage. Finally, spiritual remedies-silence, supplication, remembrance, ablution-associated practices-are presented as adjunctive tools compatible with contemporary anger-management approaches, supporting an integrated Islamic framework for emotional regulation and moral accountability.

Keywords: Anger regulation; Islamic ethics; emotional self-control; faith and conduct; psychosomatic health; parenting and temperament; Ma'ruf and Munkar; spiritual psychotherapy; moral responsibility; verbal harm.

Talim of Qur'an:

The Qur'an treats anger as a genuine human impulse that must be governed, not suppressed or denied. A believer may feel anger, yet must not allow it to carry him into injustice, harshness, or transgression. The Qur'an commends:

"who restrain anger and pardon people" (Surah Ali Imran 3:134)

It describes the righteous as those:

"when they are angry, they forgive" (Ash-Shura 42:37).

It educates the moral instinct to meet provocation with composure and excellence:

"Repel (evil) with that which is better" (Fuṣṣilat 41:34)

And it connects overlooking the faults of others with one's own hope of divine forgiveness:

"Pardon and overlook; would you not love that Allah should forgive you?" (An-Nur 24:22).

At the same time, the Qur'an warns that anger can distort judgment and become a gateway to wrongdoing. It therefore commands that even intense dislike must never compromise fairness:

"Do not let the hatred of a people cause you to be unjust. Be just; that is nearer to piety" (al-Maidah 5:8).

Where retaliation or conflict is implicated, the Qur'an imposes firm limits-resisting harm is not a license to exceed bounds-hence:

"Fight... but do not transgress" (al-Baqarah 2:190).

It also teaches disciplined disengagement:

"Turn away from the ignorant" (al-A'raf 7:199)

Its meaning one should not feed every provocation with argument or escalation.

Uncontrolled anger is harmful, in terminology of the Qur'an, because it readily opens the door to Zulm-in thought, speech, and action-and then radiates outward into relationships and society. It corrupts judgment: a person ceases to weigh matters fairly and begins to decide on the basis of wounded pride, resentment, or impulse. That is precisely why the Qur'an warns that hostility must not lead to injustice (al-Maidah 5:8). Anger also pushes people beyond limits, converting a legitimate grievance into transgression; the boundary provided by the Qur'an, repeated across contexts, is clear: do not overstep (al-Baqarah 2:190). In practice, this is how anger becomes oppression-through exaggerating another's fault, withholding what is due, punishing beyond proportion, or using authority to humiliate. Anger further poisons the tongue, producing insults, false accusations, backbiting, and harsh speech that cannot be retrieved once spoken. The praise of the Qur'an for restraining anger and pardoning (Ali Imran 3:134) is therefore not merely spiritual counsel; it is also a protection against the cascading harm that reckless words inflict-resentment that hardens, trust that breaks, and hostility that becomes entrenched within families and communities. Left unchecked, anger also feeds pride and a desire for revenge, fixing a person on "winning" rather than reforming, reconciling, or restoring rights with fairness. The divine corrective is to respond with what is better (Fuṣṣilat 41:34) and to cultivate forgiveness where it heals rather than enables further harm (Ash-Shura 42:37; An-Nūr 24:22). Even where forgiveness is not appropriate because wrongdoing will persist, the ethic remains: anger must be restrained so that justice is pursued without vindictiveness or excess.

The Qur'an also speaks of Allah's "anger" -Ghadab, but this is not human rage; it signifies divine displeasure and its consequences for persistent wrongdoing, oppression, and faithlessness. The lesson for the believer is therefore not to legitimise personal outbursts, but to fear moral consequence and to align one's reactions with justice, restraint, and mercy. In sum, the Talim of the Qur'an on anger is a structured discipline: pause and restrain, preserve justice, choose forgiveness where it reforms, respond with what is better, and withdraw from futile provocation. When this discipline is reinforced by Nabavi Hidayah-controlling oneself at the moment of anger, seeking Allah's protection from Shayṭān, and de-escalating through silence and calm-anger becomes governed by faith and character, rather than a force that governs the person.

Harmful Result of Anger:

Anger is a part of human nature; it resides in a person's core which exists from birth, and can reflect in extraordinary and unpleasant circumstances and occasions. Anger affects every part of the body - the eyes and face become fiery, hands and tongue shiver, the legs tremble, body sweats profusely and the mouth becomes foamy. The nervous system is adversely affected, the body and mind slips out of control resulting into absurd behavior and therefore, at such instance there remains little separation anger and insanity. It is highly possible in this state to commit blunders and cause irreparable damages with long term consequences. Moreover, it affects family and society as a whole. When a person becomes angry and displays his anger, he intensifies hatred among himself and people around him. A Hadith says:

"Anger spoils the faith just like vinegar spoils the honey."

Amir al-Mumineen Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as) cautions:

"Be aware of anger; it starts from madness and ends in shame and regret."

He (as) also informs:

"Anger is a bad companion which exposes a person's hidden defects. It brings the person closer towards sins and distances from good deeds".

Moula Abi Abdillah al-Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (as) explains further:

"Anger is the key to crimes and sins. It sabotages religion and damages good deeds".

Under the influence of anger, one may utter nonsense, indulge in offensive behavior and commit sinful acts; this can quickly spiral out of control. Therefore, somebody who cares for their health, peace, and faith should make consistent efforts to fight against this evil. It is anger that creates stress, destroys one's peace and causes loss of reputation. Medically it has been proven that anger is not only detrimental for both the heart and brain but causes significant harm overall. It increases the heart rate to an abnormal state and consequently increases chances of blood pressure, heart attack, and stroke. Anger however is justified where it is required and in situations which cannot be ignored. Some of the short and long-term health issues resulting from unmanaged anger include:

- i. Headache
- ii. Digestion problems, such as abdominal pain, stomach ulcers, gastritis etc
- iii. Insomnia
- iv. Increased anxiety
- v. Depression

- vi. High blood pressure
- vii. Skin problems, such as eczema
- viii. Heart attack
- ix. Stroke.

There are however situations where anger can be channeled positively and used effectively. For Jih'ad in the defense of Islam, in the establishment of Maruf (good deeds) and prevention of Munkar (offensive action), anger is necessary, but only when controlled properly. For safeguarding one's "prestige and property", anger is allowed. Similarly, extending displeasure and anger is compulsory towards a tyrant, an apostate, or a hypocrite. If through anger one can provide any relief and protection to the deserving, it is allowed. Furthermore, a total absence of anger is considered a sign of weakness, which brings humiliation, subjugation and an inability to defend one's own rights.

The writer of "al-Mustadrak" quotes Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) in his vol. ii:
"If you follow your anger then surely it will lead you towards destruction."

Anger cannot be eliminated from nature. One cannot remain unconcerned with what is occurring around them. Judgment, however, must be exercised to utilize this power in a sensible manner and at appropriate occasions. Anger as a habit generally flourishes in a human from childhood along with other faculties. This is part and parcel of human nature. The behavior of the parents with the child can equilibrate and minimize it. This should always be kept in mind.

The wise and foresighted treat their kids according to their temperament. They always try to control the child from any excessiveness or abnormalities of nature. When a child cries in anger and creates disturbances, the body shivers, and face changes color. In this situation, the child screams and wants to be aloof from others, and might hide in a corner. It is advisable to evaluate the reason for the child's anger and resolve it. Anger is the outcome of some troublesome situations, painful feelings, or displeasure. It is a result of many things which is not possible to describe in a few lines. A few reasons for it might be:

- i). Inadequate sleep
- ii). Hunger
- iii). Thirsts
- iv). Hot climate
- v). Cold weather

Other causes of anger might be the imposition of unnecessary restrictions upon the child, harsh attitude, unethical acts, offensive behavior, insults, torture, strict handling, and demanding undue obedience. To impose anything strongly against a child's wishes, affects their self-confidence and the child feels insecure. An unpleasant manner of handling can turn the child into an irrational being. The repetition of such attitude forces the child to revolt against the situation, and it is ultimately the parents who damage the personality of the child by their harsh and irrational attitude.

When the child is angry or throws tantrums, parent must remain serene and try to calm the child, because the child is either trying to seek attention or is unable to express some discomfort or unpleasantness. One should investigate the reasons behind the anger, and seek remedy to remove his grievance. If the child is disturbed due to your work, cease working, and calm your child first. If the child is concerned with some abnormal happening, then divert his/her attention. If they have any genuine demands, try to fulfill it. When the anger subsides, explain and communicate lovingly.

A father once selected a unique manner to cure his child's anger. He gave his son a bag of nails and asked him that whenever he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence. The first day the boy punched 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails punched daily gradually decreased. He discovered that it was more comfortable to maintain his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally, the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He informed his father about it and the father suggested his son to pull out a nail each day that he was unable to hold his temper. Days passed, and the young boy finally informed his father that he had pulled out all the nails from the fence. The father being overwhelmed, took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said:

"You have done well, my son! However look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a wound just like this. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out but it won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry – the wound will still be there".

Therefore, a verbal wound is worse than a physical one and not easy to cure. I conclude on the advice of Moula Amir al-Mumineen Ali Ibn Abi Talib (as) available in "Ghurur al-Hikam":

"Beware of anger; never indulge it and do not make it a permanent habit".

Moreover, it is best to keep silent and not speak in rage. A Hadith says:

"If any of you becomes angry, let him keep silent."

A Few Spiritual Remedies That Help Fight Anger:

i). *Drink 3 sips of water every time after you do Wadu (ablution) with the intention of decreasing anger.*

ii). *Recite Ya-Wadudo 360 times on any sweet thing for 40 days and then eat it (can also do it for someone else and give it to them to eat).*

iii). *Recite Ayah 69 of Surah al-Anbiya 110 times daily, blow on water and drink it.*

iv). *Recite the complete Salaw'at aloud at least 7 times*

v). *Divert attention from the cause of anger and participate in some activity which shifts your attention.*

vi). *Recite 7 time La Hawla wala Quwwata 'illa Billah*

vi). *53rd Al Da'i al-Fatimi, Dr. Sayyiduna Aaliqadar Mufaddal Saifuddin, in his Wa'az and Nashiyyah, repeatedly frames anger as a test of the Nafs and an opportunity to practice Hilm - forbearance: the goal is not to crush the other person, but to crush the anger inside oneself, while safeguarding the other person's Izzat - respect. In that spirit, the first remedy is to impose*

a deliberate pause the moment anger rises-stop speaking, stop typing, and refuse to decide anything in the heat of the moment-because a restrained tongue is often the difference between an act done for Allah and an act done for ego. Immediately turn to Allah with Taawwudh (seeking protection), and shift your state to break the “anger posture”: if you are standing, sit; if sitting, lie down; and, where possible, make Wudu-these simple changes cool the inner fire and return you to composure. Then redirect the energy of anger into a higher intention: restrain the surge, choose Afw (pardoning) where you can, and commit yourself to not humiliating, insulting, or exposing another’s faults, because protecting dignity is itself a form of Ibadat. Finally, make it a daily spiritual discipline: after Salah, ask Allah for Hilm and a clean tongue, and hold yourself to one consistent standard-no retaliation, no harshness, no contempt-so that your character, not your anger, becomes what speaks.

Conclusion:

Anger cannot be eradicated from human nature, nor should it be denied where justice, protection, and moral duty require a firm response. The central task is disciplined governance: restraining impulsive speech and conduct, recognizing triggers, and channeling anger toward principled ends. Islamic teachings treat uncontrolled anger as spiritually corrosive and socially destructive, while affirming controlled anger as a tool for safeguarding rights and resisting tyranny. The practical ethic is twofold: prevent harm-especially irreversible verbal and relational wounds-and cultivate corrective habits through silence at the moment of rage, reflective judgment, and spiritually anchored self-restraint. Parenting remains pivotal in early anger formation; a measured, compassionate approach that addresses underlying needs and avoids humiliation reduces escalation and protects the child’s psychological security. Integrating Islamic values, supplication, and remembrance with clinical insight provides a coherent and culturally resonant framework for anger management. Ultimately, controlling anger is a sign of righteousness and maturity: it preserves health, faith, and relationships, and aligns the self with a higher moral order. In summary, there is a huge impact of the Talim of Islam within psychiatric clinical practice. Using Islamic values and Aqaid can be helpful in treatment of anger management. Such aspects provide the basis for specific guidelines in working with anger health issues. Controlling anger is a sign of righteousness. So let us restrain our anger and not utter anything which cannot be taken back. Surely, one who controls his anger pleases Allah. Be a better person, retaliating will only aggravate the issue. Dua has always been a weapon of the believer, whereby he asks Allah to protect him from evil and seek refuge with Him. May Allah help us manage our anger and help us to react in the best of ways. Aameen.

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