

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Individual and Social aspects of Anger

Many people far from overcoming anger, even rationalize their anger and would go any length to justify it, both to themselves and to others, as if the welfare of the world depended on their anger.

These days it is intellectually fashionable to speak approvingly of the 'angry generation', as if anger, which is considered destructive, is a commendable virtue. In fact, anger has become a modern social ethos and a political weapon. The under privileged sections of society, particularly their leaders, organized labor, students unions etc deliberately use the idiom of anger as a strategy for action or a keynote for bargaining – 'Do this or face the consequences'. And it would appear that it works!

Some people also seem to consider anger to be
- a kind of masculine virtue and
- wear it as a badge of leadership—for being regarded as a boss among anti-social elements.

In the underworld of criminals, refrigerated anger is a status symbol.

In advertisements, newspapers, electronic media etc, we see anger and violence depicted in great detail. Mental food of this kind has a great harmful effect on the general public. Yet there is hardly any protest against this marketing of anger as a commodity.

Definition of Anger

Anger is momentary madness.

Anger is a mirror into which you do not venture to see your own face.

The Oxford dictionary defines anger as 'extreme displeasure'.

We meet anger at home, in streets, offices, play grounds, legislative assemblies and most frequently within ourselves.

Who has Anger?

As in every piece of wood, there is hidden fire, so there is hidden anger in every human being, because of the 'Rajas' constituent of his/her nature. All are susceptible to anger – mildly or strongly. Anger is contagious. Words ignited by anger can cause anger in others. Soothing words are the water hydrants needed when passions are inflamed.

Evil effects of Anger

The evil effects of anger are innumerable.

The first thing that happens to an angry person is that, he forgets the lessons of wisdom he has learnt in life.

After that he loses control over his thoughts and emotions.

He becomes over-active with his highly charged ego, as his only guide.

He loses his power of discrimination, sense of proportion & becomes aggressive hostile in manner.

When anger becomes the second nature of a person, physical health and equanimity of mind suffer and inner peace vanishes.

Anger can destroy friendships, families, business partnerships, professional prospects.

Communal and ethnic riots, wars, suicides, murder and many other forms of crime are basically products of anger. In fact, anger makes even a handsome person look ugly.

Has Anger any bright side also?

Here is the question to be asked : Are you using your anger, or is anger using you?

Is anger an efficient instrument in your hand or are you a mere tool in the hands of your anger?

If we have not learnt how to overcome anger, we cannot use anger deliberately for any creative purpose. It is a difficult task to use utilize anger masterfully and deliberately.

Aristotle says : “Anybody can become angry – that is easy, but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose and in the right way – that is not within everybody’s power and is not easy.”

Case Study of a mother exhibiting anger on a child :

If a mother did really know how to use her anger as deliberately, as electricity is used in a calibrated manner to heat water, it could be said that such conduct could be permissible where other measures would not work. However if she herself gets burnt in administering anger, then her anger therapy cannot do good to her child in the long run. Certainly all mothers, except the abnormal ones, have their children’s best interests at heart. Thus a mother may use anger as a disciplinary measure to bring about good for her child.

Anger is poisonous and contagious. When the mother becomes genuinely angry, administers the blows of anger on her children,

- the children also get angry, but are unable to react or protest effectively.
- besides, discipline imposed by fear has only a marginal chance of becoming a good acquired habit
- there is a co-existence of suppressed, but developing animosity in the heart of the child
- the result is that their anger goes underground in their minds and lies in wait, manufacturing animosity of different kinds in their psyche. When this animosity will suddenly ex;lude, as it must, one day, she, who had not learnt to overcome her anger, and is now also unable to use her anger-therapy on her grown up children, would find herself to be a very unhappy and frustrated person.

And to be sure, she has herself contributed to this situation! It is to be pondered over whether or not the permanent benefit of filial love should be sacrificed for a temporary advantage.

But the situation would be entirely different if the mother practiced anger therapy on her children after learning how to overcome her own anger. In that case, she would be only hissing like the cobra, who was taught by Narada, to hiss while facing opponents, but not to bite.

Creative utilization of anger is impossible for a person who has not learnt how to overcome his anger.

Sastric and Practical solutions for Overcoming Anger :

Only those thoughtful persons

- who are convinced that anger is their prime enemy,
- after having experienced the evil effects of anger in their inner and outer life, seek to overcome anger.

Lord Sri Krishna refers to ‘krodha’ ‘Anger’ in seven verses in the Gita :

dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate
krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ
smṛti-bhramśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati

While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises. From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool. [BG 2.62-63]

arjuna uvāca
atha kena prayukto 'yam pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ
anicchann api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ

Arjuna said: O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, by what is one impelled to sinful acts, even unwillingly, as if engaged by force?

śrī-bhagavān uvāca

kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ
mahāśano mahā-pāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: It is lust only, Arjuna, which is born of contact with the material mode of passion and later transformed into wrath, and which is the all-devouring sinful enemy of this world. [BG 3.36-37]

dambho darpo 'bhimānaś ca krodhaḥ pārūṣyam eva ca
ajñānaṁ cābhijātasya pārtha sampadam āsurim

Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance—these qualities belong to those of demoniac nature, O son of Pṛthā. [BG 16.4]

tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet

There are three gates leading to this hell—lust, anger and greed. Every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul. [BG 16.21]

buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto dhṛtyātmānaṁ niyama ca
śabdādīn viṣayāms tyaktvā rāga-dveṣau vyudasya ca
vivikta-sevī laghv-āśī yata-vāk-kāya-mānasaḥ
dhyāna-yoga-paro nityaṁ vairāgyaṁ samupāśritaḥ
ahaṅkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ kāmaṁ krodhaṁ parigrahaṁ
vimucya nirmamaḥ canto brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

Being purified by his intelligence and controlling the mind with determination, giving up the objects of sense gratification, being freed from attachment and hatred, one who lives in a secluded place, who eats little, who controls his body, mind and power of speech, who is always in trance and who is detached, free from false ego, false strength, false pride, lust, anger, and acceptance of material things, free from false proprietorship, and peaceful—such a person is certainly elevated to the position of self-realization. [BG 18.51-53]

Anger is a quality of the demoniac part of human nature. The others in the rogues-gallery of base emotions are Pride, arrogance, conceit, harshness and ignorance. These rough-necks always move together and never in isolation. It is indeed a powerful gang. Therefore in facing these brutes we must be more determined, courageous, innovative and skilful than the members of this gang put together. Though the job is not an easy one, the Lord gives us the assurance that anger can be overcome.

First mark it out – anger is your prime enemy. Unless you name your enemy as your enemy, you can neither knock it out, nor have the will and enthusiasm for the battle. Our modern tendency is to become complacent. He who does not call anger as man's enemy is sabotaging himself.

Man is driven to commit many sins propelled by 'kama' and 'krodha', desire and anger. So anger is not an innocent deviation, but the origin of a host of sins and hence an enemy.

By forsaking evil passions that originate from Rajas, one will become calm and thus be endowed with an inner atmosphere for a battle against Rajas in one's constitution.

Practical recipe for controlling anger by Sri Vidyanaraya swami in 'Jivanmukti-Viveka'

There are two types of anger; your anger on somebody and somebody's anger on you.

When you tend to get angry with others, you should address your mind and say, “My mind, if you must be angry with those who cause you harm, why don’t you then get angry with anger itself?”

When anger has its own way, and succeeds in exciting a man to inflict insult and injury to another, it at once destroys the angry man’s virtue, cherished values of life, righteousness, good name and wealth. Even when it does not develop to that extent, it scorches the mind of the man. While angry, you live through hell, even before death. So you have no enemy worse than anger.

The meaning of this truth should be repeatedly reflected upon. You should get angry with anger itself, and this will be productive of peace and enlightenment.

Hence, how could anger, which is apt to cause so much harm here and hereafter, find any place in the minds of worthy people? This process of thinking is one of the best ways of overcoming anger.

When others get angry with you, you should never think : “I have done no wrong. Then why do these people get angry with me, who am so innocent?” You are really not innocent. Is it not a great offense that you have so far failed to get rid of the bondage of life and death and attain illumination?

Another way of avoiding being provoked by others’ anger is to regard those who get angry with us, as our benefactors and be thankful to them for their services, for by getting angry with us they reveal to us our faults and thus strengthen our non-attachment. For rendering this service to us they even sacrifice their own peace of mind. And for this we should be all the more grateful to them.

Practical solutions for anger from Western saints :

“When you are angry above measure....

- think within yourself, how momentary is man’s life.
- Let us think how much more grievous are the consequences of our anger than the acts which arouse it. Let this truth be present to you in the excitement of anger, that
- to be moved by passion is not manly, but that mildness and gentleness, as they are more human, so also are they more manly.” - Marcus Aurelius

Whenever you are angry, be assured that it is not only a present evil, but you have also augmented a habit, and added fuel to fire... If you desire not to be of an angry temper, then do not feed the habit. Give it nothing to help its increase.

Be quiet at first, and reckon the days in which you have not been angry. ‘I used to be angry every day; now every other day; then every third day or fourth day.’ And if you miss being angry for as long as thirty days, offer a grateful thanks-giving to God. - Epictetus

The greatest remedy for anger is delay. When angry, count 10 before you speak, if very angry, count 100. Put a break on anger. - Seneca

Lord Sri Krishna’s Teachings :

In Sri Krishna’s Teachings we have a complete system for overcoming anger, as it is based on sound psychology and includes disciplines which all can practice whatever be one’s religious denomination. He says : ‘Know that this is our enemy here, all-devouring and cause of all sin.’ [BG 3.37]

One of the traits of delusion and ignorance is that we tend to take an enemy for a friend and a friend for an enemy. So, Sri Krishna instructs us to mark out anger as a direct enemy and treat it as such. Otherwise anger overcomes us with the aid of our willing and liberal help. As we always get angry at any pretext, anger has become our friend by familiarity or association. Whenever we come under the power of anger, we become deluded. Whatever we do in delusion, will hurt us today or tomorrow. Delusion affects thinking, distorting memory and we forget the important lessons of life we may have already learnt. Then intelligence, instead of saving us from such anger, impels us to rush to do things in a manner harmful to ourselves.

The words and actions prompted by anger are very forceful because those are directly connected with the source of energy within us, which is desire. While the elemental force of fire is vital we cannot allow free movement of fire in our houses. Overcoming anger will therefore mean to separating the energy source in man from its destructive aspect, without destroying the power source itself.

The enemy of the whole world is material desire, from which all evil comes to living beings. When obstructed by some cause, the desire is transformed into anger. Then anger is desire itself. It is born of the energy of Rajas, for when desire arouses, it rouses Rajas, and urges the person to action. For it is only when urged by material desire, that a man commits sin.

Thus anger is inextricably linked to the other baser instincts in man and cannot be tackled in isolation. One gets attached to objects by constantly thinking of them. From attachment comes longing and from longing anger. Sri Rama says : "Keeping the palate (greed to eat) and lust (attraction for opposite sex) under control, you may live anywhere."

tasmāt tvam indriyāṅy ādau niyamyā bharatarṣabha
pāpmānaṁ prajahi hy enaṁ jñāna-vijñāna-nāśanam

Therefore, O Arjuna, best of the Bhāratas, in the very beginning curb this great symbol of sin [lust] by regulating the senses, and slay this destroyer of knowledge and self-realization. [BG 3.41]

As a strong wind sweeps away a boat on the water, even one of the roaming senses on which the mind focuses can carry away a man's intelligence. Therefore, O mighty-armed, one whose senses are restrained from their objects is certainly of steady intelligence. [BG 2.67-68]

Everyone in this material world is looking for peace, but they don't want to control the senses. For example, if you are diseased, and the doctor says "Take this medicine" or "Follow this diet," but you refuse. You take whatever you want, against the instruction of the physician, so how can you be cured? Similarly, we want to be cured of the chaotic condition of this material world, we want peace and prosperity, but we are not willing to control the senses.

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Control of the senses is not to be brought about by violent efforts. Only by realizing the Lord, it is perfectly achieved. But at first one must struggle for the end. Even the craving for the sense objects leaves an aspirant when he realizes the Lord.

Improper sensory inputs create attachments and aversions and delusion, which disturb the mind, making it difficult to control (eg Food, Place, association etc) . Freed from these, the mind becomes pure. In order to consciously bring about preponderance of Sattva in our nature, we need to allow only Sattvic inputs and avoid those that are Rajasic or Tamasic.

The Method of counter thoughts by Patanjali yoga sutras :

'chitta vritti nirodha' (control of thought waves). We cannot see the depths of the lake because its surface is covered with ripples which make the water muddy and disturbed. We can possibly catch a glimpse, when the ripples have subsided, and when the water is calm. The bottom of the lake is our true self; the lake is the Chitta (mind), waves are the vrittis. Repetition of vrittis of similar nature gradually build up our tendencies, samskaras and again and again samskaras in their turn to give rise to similar thought-waves, the process working both ways. Here we come to grips with the problem of anger. Expose the mind to constant thought of anger and resentment and you will find that these krodha-vrittis have almost unknowingly built krodha-samskaras. Those people who are known to be short-tempered or bad-tempered, are the people who have gradually accumulated krodha-samskaras. Such persons easily become victims of verbal delusion (called 'Vikalpa' 'words having no reality').

Many of the tragedies in families and society are manifestations of verbal delusions – genuine or designed. If we can consciously remove the occasions of Vikalpa or verbal delusion from our interpersonal relations, occasions in which we have unpleasant or angry encounters will be greatly minimized. The very same situation which will set a bad-tempered person red with rage, may only cause amusement to those who have not developed krodha-samskaras. Anger is not based on reason. Rather, a susceptible nature finds a reason for manifesting anger. So it is necessary to change one's character to be able to overcome anger.

A person's character is the sum total of samskaras, acquired tendencies, however is not impervious to change. As a sandbank of a river, looking sufficiently stable, may change, when the currents of water change and flow in another direction, a character may change when the vrittis change. Each action is like the pulsation quivering over the surface of the lake. The vibrations die out but what is left? The samskaras, the impressions. When a large number of these samskaras are left in the mind, they become a habit. The samskaras are left by these vibrations (vrittis) passing out of our mind, each of them leaving its results. Our character is the sum total of these marks, and according as some particular wave prevails one takes that tone. If good prevails, one becomes good; if wickedness, one becomes wicked; if joyfulness prevails, one becomes happy.

The only remedy for bad habits is counter habits; all the bad habits that have left their impressions are to be controlled by good habits. Go on doing good, thinking of holy thoughts continuously; that is the only way to suppress base impressions. Never call anyone hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits, and repeated habits can alone change character.

To control our passions we have to control them at their roots; there alone we shall be able to burn out their very seeds. As fried seeds thrown into the ground will never sprout, these passions will never arise.

Origin of Anger : In its origin anger is a thought-wave, or a thought bubble. This thought-bubble originates in Avidya, ignorance (to consider the noneternal, impure, painful to the eternal, pure, blissful atman). This Avidya is invariably associated with Asmita, Raga, Dvesha and Abhinivesha – these are all obstructions to Yoga, and each of these make substantial contribution to 'krodha' or anger. We need to understand these four companions of Avidya, which originate and rest in ignorance. Asmita (egoism) is to identify with mind and senses. Raga is clinging to bodily enjoyments. Dvesha is aversion for that which gives displeasure. Abhinivesha is absorption in bodily consciousness.

Those who want to overcome anger through discrimination must not allow their passions to linger in their minds. One must not carry in one's mind, potent anger-bombs for using in hypothetical situations in one's affairs : 'if he does this or says this, I shall finish him today.'

The other day I spared him, not today in any case!’ Such a disposition to become angry is bad for mental health and can aggravate our bad tempers to pathological limits.

Facing the Anger from Others

Story : ‘When shoe bites the man.....’

Once an editorial appeared in a newspaper making very unpleasant, uncharitable and offensive remarks about a Minister of the Government of India. Some MPs sought to raise the issue and provoke the Minister. But he was the least excited. He dismissed the whole affair – the ‘Vikalpa’, verbal delusion on which less balanced people would have lost their heads – with a quiet and pithy remark: ‘When the shoe bites the man, man does not bite the shoe!’ If our ego-sense can be restrained to harmless limits, we can easily see the funny side of things, and save ourselves from becoming ridiculous slaves of merciless anger.

Story : ‘To put off the fire or to punish the fire-setter?’

One wishes there were less use of anger and more of humour in personal relations and society. In life, we have sometimes to face explosive situations. Suppose I see somebody setting my house on fire. I do not run after the man, catch and thrash him. But I rush to put out the fire. What about catching the man? Yes, that is very much necessary when I find that an explosive anger has exploded or is exploding within me. But the man to catch is myself.

Love is opposite of Anger : Suppose a big wave of anger comes into the mind, how are we to control that? Just by raising an opposing wave. Think of love. Sometimes a mother is very angry with somebody, and at that time, her child comes to her, a transformation ensues. She kisses the baby; the old waves of anger dies out and a new wave, love for the child arises. Love is the opposite of anger.

Buddha

- there was never an occasion when Buddha flamed forth in anger,
- there was never an incident when an unkind word escaped his lips
- he had vast tolerance
- he thought of the world as IGNORANT rather than WICKED,
as UNSATISFACTORY rather than REBELLIOUS.
- he met opposition with calm and confidence.
- there was no nervous irritability or fierce anger about him.
- his conduct was a perfect expression of courtesy and good feeling with a spice of irony in it

Even when he was abused, he did not become angry and forget his duty as a teacher, the awakener of mankind that he was.

Story : Who is an Outcaste? Once Buddha went out with his alms-bowl to beg for food and approached the house of a brahmana priest, where the sacrificial fire was blazing upon the altar. The priest shouted : ‘Stay there, O wretched Sramana, you are an outcast.’ The Buddha asked : ‘Who is an outcast?’ and answered his question for clarifying the understanding of the brahmana :

‘An outcast is the man who is angry and bears hatred,

The man who is wicked and hypocritical,

One who embraces error and is full of deceit.

Whoever is an instigator, has evil desires, is envious, shameless

And unafraid of wrongdoing – let him be known as an outcast.

Not by birth does one become an outcast, not by birth does one become a Brahmana

By deeds one becomes an outcaste, by deeds one becomes a Brahmana.

In the face of anger, the Buddha always manifested serene rationality, calmness of temper,

generosity of heart, superb courtesy and gentle firmness. He was always healing people sick

with exploding anger. He did not take it for granted that the angry-person might not have a

reason deserving respectful and searching consideration. This broad-minded and liberal attitude is revealed in the following instance.

Story : Be prepared to hear complaints about you Once the Buddha entered a public hall and found some of his disciples talking of a Brahman who had just been accusing Gautama of impiety and finding fault with the order of mendicants he had founded. 'Bretheren', said Gautama, 'if others speak against me, or against my religion, or against the Order, there is no reason why you should be angry, discontented or displeased with them. If you are so, you will not only bring yourself into danger of spiritual loss, but you will not be able to judge, whether what they say is correct or incorrect.'

Starve your Anger :

Those who are earnest about extinguishing the fire, must not continue to feed it with inflammable things. An angry person should not add fuel to his anger. It is the pampered ego that supplies fuel to anger, delighting in finding fault with others, completely ignoring its own failings, all with their root as ignorance. For removal of ignorance, moral living is essential. Shila (good conduct) and Prajna (introspection leading to intuitive insight) should go hand in hand in our dealings with the world. The anger cannot grow in a good heart and an enlightened mind.

The noble Eightfold path that Buddha taught is to elevate one from under-developed condition to a state of fulfillment : 1.Right Views 2.Right Aspirations 3.Right Speech 4.Right Speech 5.Right Conduct 6.Right Livelihood 7.Right Effort 8.Right Mindfulness and Right Contemplation.

Six states of consciousness that lead to Unity & Harmony

The Roots of Amity (Kosambiya sutta)

The normal propensity of the angry man is to injure the victim of his anger with his body, tongue and mind. But the fact remains that the mind is the central agency for setting anger in action through other limbs. Hence it is important to cultivate such a state of consciousness that anger is not allowed to rise in the mind.

Once when the Buddha happened to visit Kosambi he learnt about disputes prevailing among the bhikkus of that locality. He called the disputing bhikkus to his presence and addressed them thus :

'Bhikkus, you are disputing and hurling taunts at one another, because you do not seem to know the states of consciousness which lead to harmony and peace. There are six states of consciousness which conduce to Unity and Harmony :

1. Acts of goodwill towards fellow beings
2. Words of good will sincerely spoken
3. Thoughts of goodwill sincerely harboured
4. Sharing with others all that you have down to the last crumb of bread
5. Sharing with others your higher life of flawless virtue
6. Removing all evil around you with the noble saving creed of love.

These six states of consciousness lead to accord, amity, love and supreme knowledge. Each of these leads successively a step further. And while there is something further to be done, let there be no falling back in your step.

Teachings of Western Mystics :

In the Old Testament when the patriarch Joseph sent back his brothers from Egypt to his father's house in the land of Canan in the Western Palestine, he gave them only one advice : 'Be not angry on the way.'

St. Francis De Sales quotes this one significant advice of Joseph and writes to a devout disciple : 'This wretched life is but a journey to the happy life to come. Let us not be angry with one another on the way, but rather let us march one with the band of our bretheren and companions, meekly, peaceably and lovingly.'

St James : 'my beloved brethren, let everyman be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.'

St Augustine : 'It is better to deny entrance to just and reasonable anger, than to admit to it, be it ever so little. Once admitted, it is with difficulty driven out again. It enters as a little twig and in less than no time, it grows bit and becomes a beam'.

If the mind nurtures anger, it will manufacture out of it, hatred, which will be extremely difficult to get rid of. Anger is always well supplied with thousand false pretexts for nourishing it. 'There was never an angry man who thought that his anger was unjust.'

As far as a spiritual aspirant is concerned, anger is neither righteous, nor in any way justifiable. However if we encounter anger directed at us, we can use this experience, for our spiritual benefit, if we follow this teaching of Christ faithfully and energetically :

- Love your enemies,
- bless them that curse you,
- do good to them that hate you
- pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

Cultivating Meekness or Humility

St Francis suggests a method of banishing risen anger, which seems to parallel Patanjali's teaching. 'In difficult situations contrary measures are to be adopted.' He says : 'So also, we must repair anger instantly by a contrary act of meekness. Fresh wounds, as they say, are most easily cured.'

Anger is so destructive of the spiritual potentialities of a person. This corrosive poison should be expelled at the earliest. Just as a farmer fills his granary at the time of harvest, we too should build up a stock of sweetness and calmness deep down within our character when circumstances are propitious so that these become our involuntary habit pattern. He says, 'Again when your mind is in a state of tranquility and without any cause of anger, supply yourself with meekness and mildness. Speak all your words and do all your actions, little and great, in the mildest manner possible.'

Most of us can behave in a correct manner when we are aware that we are being observed. But the true test of character is to be noted in how we behave unawares. Unless we build up good habit patterns through conscious self-discipline, our inner samskaras will show up embarrassingly, when we are off guard.

Often those greatly fail, who in public appear to be angels, but are demons in their own homes. These 'angels' in public affairs and 'demons' in home affairs will do well to seriously consider how much their prospects of happiness in life would improve if they could be angels in their homes also.

Often there is a wrong notion that meekness is cultivated only by spineless people, who are weak and timid. In fact, meekness, cannot be practiced without great strength of character, as we find in the case of Christ himself and his heroic apostles and saints.

Right and Wrong attitude when a sadhaka falls back to old tendencies and wakes up again

‘We must be displeased at our faults, but in a peaceable, settled and firm manner.’ Just as the mild and affectionate reproach of a father has far greater power to correct his child than rage and passion, so when we have committed any fault, if we reprehend our heart with mild and calm, having more compassion for it than passion against it, and encourage it to amendment, the repentance will sink much deeper and penetrate it more effectively than a fretful, angry and stormy repentance.’ Though our spiritual failures should cause us some remorse, we are warned to refrain from bitter, gloomy, cynical and vehement self-criticism. Because those who are overly angry with themselves ‘for having been angry, troubled at being troubled and vexed at being vexed’, they only succeed in keeping their hearts drenched and steeped in passion, which makes the task of overcoming anger even more difficult.

Suppose I had resolved not to yield to arrogance and pride, but all the same found myself miserably falling into it, then I should not reprove myself in the manner : ‘Are you not wretched and abominable, you, that after so many resolutions have suffered yourself with shame; lift up no more your eyes to heaven, blind impudent traitor that you are, a rebel to your God.’

I should rather correct it reasonably by the way of compassion : ‘alas, my poor heart, see we are fallen into the pit we had so firmly resolved to avoid! Well, let us rise up again and quit it and hope that it will assist us to be more constant for the time to come. Let us enter again the path of humility...God will help us; we shall do better.’

The precept is :

We should by all means rise up again after every fall
With a new resolve
Meekly, humbling ourselves before God
Through the knowledge of our own frailty.

It is not the angry protestation against our own weakness, but meek acknowledgement of our frailties that will help us better to eradicate our false ego, and enable us to acquire genuine spiritual strength.

Humility and Meekness towards others

How do we make peace with others and become reconciled?

When a man humbles himself for his offences, he pleases others and reconciles himself to them whom he has offended. The meek man -- God Almighty protects and comforts; God inclines Himself to him and sends him the bounty of His Grace.

Humility is neither angered, nor angers anyone. Humility attracts God’s grace to the soul; and God’s grace, when it comes delivers the soul from these two grievous passions. For what can be more grievous than to be angry with one’s neighbour or to anger him? Does humility deliver one from only two passions? It delivers the soul from every passion and every temptation.

How to get Humility? The ways to humility are :

- bodily labours done diligently (humble the body and soul within it),
- considering oneself below all others (implants humility and uproots pride),
- alongside ceaseless prayer to God. (a man humbles himself, if, knowing that he can achieve no virtue without God's help, he never ceases to pray, asking God to show him mercy)

How can a man puff himself up before anyone, or blame or belittle anyone if he regards himself as lower than all?

A man who prays without ceasing, if he achieves something, knows why he achieves it, and can take no pride in it. Since he attributes all his achievements to God, he cannot attribute it to his own powers and thus always renders thanks to Him and constantly calls upon Him, trembling lest he be deprived of help. Thus he prays with humility and is made humble by prayer. The more he progresses in virtue the greater becomes his humility, and as his humility grows he receives help and progresses in humility.

All human minds besides being constituted by the various permutations and combinations of *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*, are not alike in their expressions, guided and controlled as they are by unknown past tendencies. Hence, causes and expressions of anger by different individuals are varied. But the therapeutic effect of humility is universal. Humility works as an antidote to anger for all, everywhere and at all times. Cultivation of humility will help everyone – first to discipline anger, and finally to overcome it.

Analysis of Anger– how it grows and how it can be overcome

Troubles frequently arise and unpleasantness occurs among brethren, but as a rule they hasten to settle these differences and are pacified. However it may sometimes happen that, having bowed and made peace, a monk continues to nurse a feeling of hurt against his brother and to cling to thoughts against him. This is resentment; and much care is needed not to become hardened in it and perish thereby. A man who has at once made peace with another, after being irritated with him, has curbed his anger, but has done nothing against resentment, and so he continues to be sore with his brother. For resentment is one thing, anger another, irritation another and being disturbed yet another. Disturbance is the movement and stirring up of thoughts, which arouse and irritate the heart. Irritation is a vengeful uprising against the man who offended you, which gives rise to presumptuousness. If you so wish, you can extinguish even irritation before it leads to anger. But if you continue to disturb and irritate yourself, you will be like a man who adds fuel to fire and so produces flames, which is anger, and anger, if it lingers, turns to resentment, from which a man will not be freed until he sheds his blood (without superhuman efforts).'

'It is one thing to pluck a small blade of grass, and another to uproot a large tree.'

'He who prays for his enemy will have no resentment.'

If we remove and get rid of our false ego, we will be freed from both anger and worry.

Story : 'Loosing a moving train'

(‘The Get rid’ story) William James in his book ‘The Varieties of Religious Experience’

Without the slightest feeling of annoyance and impatience, I have seen a train that I had planned to take with a good deal of interested and pleasurable anticipation move out of the station without me, because my baggage did not arrive. The porter from the hotel came running and panting into the station just as the train pulled out of sight. When he saw me, he

looked as if he feared a scolding, and began to tell of being blocked in a crowded street and unable to get out. When he had finished, I said, to him : 'It doesn't matter at all, you couldn't help it, so we will try again tomorrow. Here is your fee, I am sorry you had all this trouble in earning it.' The look of surprise that came over his face was so filled with pleasure that I was repaid on the spot for the delay in my departure. Next day he would not accept a cent for the service, and he and I are friends for life.

Summary of Solutions to Anger :

While conventional piety has its advantages, faced by real life situations of modern society, we need to take a new look into ancient spiritual traditions in order to discover methods of meaningful and sane living. Modern people need religious education and spiritual inspiration in the context of management of anger and resolving conflicts.

'He who is not perturbed by adversity, who does not long for happiness, who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a man of steady wisdom.' [BG 2.56]

1. Spirit of universal goodwill and friendliness - 'sarve janah sukhino bhavantu'

May the wicked become virtuous
May the virtuous attain tranquility
May the tranquil be free from bonds
May the freed make others free.

Chant Hare Krishna mantra everyday and be happy –

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

2.As a mother at the risk of life, watches over her own child, her only child, so also let everyone cultivate a boundless (friendly) mind towards all beings.

3.For purification of the psychophysical system, practice

Yama – non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, brahmacharya, non-receiving motivated gifts
Niyama – internal & external purity, contentment, austerity, study of scriptures, surrender to God

4.Preponderance of Sattva

5.If you desire to overcome anger, do not cause anger in others. It means that we learn to think, talk and act in a manner which is conducive to unity, peace and harmony and does not rouse anger in others. A man who sets fire to his neighbour's house will not be able to save his house from catching fire. Follow Buddha's teaching on 'six states of consciousness' :

- 1.Acts of goodwill towards fellow beings
- 2.Words of good will sincerely spoken
- 3.Thoughts of goodwill sincerely harboured
- 4.Sharing with others all that you have down to the last crumb of bread
- 5.Sharing with others your higher life of flawless virtue
- 6.Removing all evil around you with the noble saving creed of love.

6. Practise 'Austerity of speech' by Sri Krishna in BG 17th chapter. For this,

- Avoid unpleasant words, both at home and in public
- Refrain from discussing controversial matters with people having dogmatic views
- Speak true, beneficial and pleasing words
- Hear more, speak less, and to the point.
- In facing unpleasant criticism, listen intently to learn precious truths about our character.

- Constantly cultivate an attitude of ‘good-natured friendliness’. This attitude soothes people’s nerves instead of irritating them.
- Ignoring pinpricks, one should retain a lively sense of humor and
- Try to see funny side of things.

7. How should one react to anger? Do not add fuel to your anger. A thinking pattern of this kind – ‘If he behaves again like this with me, I shall behave like this. If he again insults me I shall teach him a lesson which he will never forget’. It adds fuel to the fire of anger. Remember what petrol is to fire, anger is to anger. What water is to fire, gentleness is to anger. So follow Buddha’s precept : ‘Let man overcome anger by gentleness.’ In a creative sense, gentleness is more powerful than a bomb.

8. If you do not put away your pride, you cannot put away your anger. At the root of it all factors contributing to pride is the false ego. When the false ego is eradicated, anger is uprooted. Conquer anger by humility.

9. Do not try to make moderate and discreet use of anger in sadhaka’s stage. Risen anger has to be skillfully curbed as an adept charioteer controls the chariot that is about to go astray.

10. Buddha warns :

Beware of bodily anger and control your body.

Beware of anger of your tongue and control your tongue.

Beware of anger of your mind and control your mind.

11. Two ways to face explosive situations : To wake up to Supersoul thru prayer and raise the wave of love to quell the wave of anger.

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