



UNCONTROLLED ANGER AND ITS MANAGEMENT

AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY IN THE QUR'ĀN, THE *SUNNAH* AND THE CURRENT PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

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A B S T R A C T

This paper explores the understanding and amelioration of anger problems as an important mental health issue particularly in the context of religious and cultural milieu. Anger is a worldwide problem and exists in every community in different shapes and forms due to cultural and religious diversity, and subsequently demand for a distinctive approach for each community to heal it. The Muslims worldwide identify themselves with Islamic way of life (*Dīn Islām*) and the anger woe appears to be as common among Muslims as in other communities.

This paper attempts to explore the modern psychological investigations as well as Islamic teachings to present a profound understanding of anger and proposes an integrative anger management programme including anger inoculation and behavioural strategies grounded in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) as well as in modern psychological investigations.

The paper finally recommends the professionals working in the mental health field to include the findings of this paper in their clinical practice as a distinctive strategy.

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Introduction

The current century was thought to be a century of tolerance, peace and harmony grounded in knowledge, reasoning and dialogue via effective use of the tools of globalisation like cyber technology initiating and maintaining free communication among nations and civilisations and subsequently creating a peaceful and prosperous global village. Contrary to these expectations, the start of the century witnessed terrible wars, ethnic violence, crimes, massacres, prejudice, discrimination and racism, which are reigning in most parts of the world. Turning to the homes, child abuse, spouse abuse, domestic violence and even breaking apart intimate relationships are prevalent. This situation once analysed from a psychological angle squarely falls under the impact of uncontrolled anger.¹

Numerous studies show that the anger problem, in fact, is not confined to a specific group or community but it prevails through out the world in different forms, shapes and shades. It could be triggered as a result of a conflict, injustice, negligence, humiliation or betrayal.² The people irrespective of their clime, race, colour, ethnicity and religion are vulnerable to act angrily and their minds can be easily hijacked by it. Anger, thus, is a global, national and local problem, and more so is the uncontrolled anger.³

The present study is an attempt to discover the underlying account for uncontrolled anger in the context of Islamic teachings and the current psychological studies and strategies. This interdisciplinary enquiry attempts to generate an indigenous strategy grounded in theory and practice in order to ameliorate uncontrolled anger

1. See, Eric R. Dehlen and Ryan C. Martin, "The experience, expression, and control of anger in perceived social support," *Personality and Individual Differences*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2005), pp. 391–401.

2. See, Raymond C. Tifftrate, Howard Kassonov and L. Dundin, "Anger episodes in high- and low-trait-anger community adults," *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 58, no. 12 (2002), pp. 1573–1590.

3. See, Muhammad Tahir Khalily, "Does anger hijack the mind?," *The Frontier Post*, Peshawar (23 June: 2008), p. 4.