
Buddhist Psychological Approach for Anger Management in The Contemporary World

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Abstract

This paper aims to propose a Buddhist psychological framework for managing anger in the modern world. It applies Buddhist psychological principles to analyze general problematic situations, the origins of anger, and methods for anger management in modern contexts. This article emphasises three effective strategies for managing anger: 1) The Buddhist behavioural changing involves relaxation methods consisting of the threefold purity of bodily behaviour (*kāyasucarita*) and communication, which is the fourfold purity of verbal behaviour (*vacīsucarita*) for controlling anger. 2) The Buddhist cognitive restructuring involves identifying automatic thoughts, recognizing cognitive distortions, and substituting positive thoughts to manage anger effectively. 3) The Buddhist wisdom approach encompasses the application of wisdom through rational attention (*yonisomanasikāra*) and mindfulness meditation. The outcomes of implementing these methods empower individuals to effectively manage anger and foster mental growth in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Psychological Approach; Anger, Management; Contemporary World

Introduction

Today, almost all people in large and small communities worldwide have encountered internal problems, irritability, frustration, anxiety, stress, and rage, as well as social conflict, violence, war, and crimes on account of the effects of anger. Anger is an emotional state of mind that leads to problems at work, our relationships, and the overall quality of our lives. In psychology, assertive anger, behavioral anger, chronic anger, overwhelmed rage, passive anger, retaliatory fury, self-abusive anger, verbal anger, and volatile anger are all treated as anger problems.

Anger (*dosa*) in Buddhist teachings is an unwholesome mental factor from evil consciousness rooted in hatred (*dosamūlacitta*). It is a destructive emotion involving feelings of resentment. The emotional mind, combined with harmful elements like rage, jealousy,

envy, and remorse, is the most societal conflict, crime, and violence. Unwise thought (*ayonisomanasikāra*) and rejection (*paṭigha*) can develop wrathful emotions. (Bhikkhu Bodhi 2012, 179). When one looks upon objects carelessly and unwisely, un-arisen ill-will grows, and arisen ill-will increases and expands. Like this, rage emerges when inappropriate attention is devoted to unpleasant or undesired things or signs, but it vanishes when improper meditation on repulsive sensory objects occurs.

The angry mind is closely correlated with the human nervous system on a physiological level. The neurological system is also affected by the constant activity of the human mind, which can display various features such as anger or agitation. The neurological system receives signals from ideas to trigger bodily actions. If signalling is carried out unexpectedly, it will have a physical effect. When someone is angry, there are frequent physical and psychological changes. Some people in modern society quickly become angry with the circumstances such as bad social contact, financial difficulties, the loss of something admirable, environmental conditions, and other people's behavior. Anger can be brought by individual factors such as trigger events, negative thoughts, sadness, depression, and inner restlessness. The ones who are consumed by rage take the lives of others quickly. No one can deny that anger negatively affects the body, mind, self, and others.

The threefold purity of bodily behaviour (*kāyasucarita*) and fourfold purity of verbal behaviour (*vacīsucarita*), contained in a behavioural-changing approach, would be methods for anger treatment. In the Buddhist cognitive restructuring approach, five cognitive reconstructing methods are outlined for ending destructive thoughts based on *Vitakka Saṇḍhāna Sutta*. For wisdom to heal anger, *Āghātapativinaya Sutta* would be applied to manage anger.

The Concepts of Anger and Its Problems

Anger is one of three unwholesome roots, *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*, that cause immoral mental, verbal, and physical actions, leading to suffering and the pursuit of the cycle of birth and death. According to Buddhist philosophy, anger, called '*dosa*', is a destructive emotion that implies animosity or hate. It is a disastrous fire because it has enormous destructive power over the beauty of the nature of the mind and the world (Peter Masefield 2001, 80). Whoever is burned by the fire of the malicious may commit evil acts such as killing. It could be assumed

that fires generate intense social and emotional isolation, which is the ultimate source of an angry one's distress and plunges the person into a world of shadows and illusion.

In the comprehensive manual of *Abhidhamma*, anger is always coupled with displeasure and malice. When they cannot obtain their goals, people who regret the sensation of discontent based on greed may also carry intense resentment. It might be true that new findings from health organizations suggest that negative emotions like rage, aggression, anxiety, and despair have an impact on how well the immune system and cardiovascular systems function. (Silva 2014). The mind or consciousness is related to the human nervous system. The human mind is constantly working and has characteristics that can change, such as when the reason is angry or stressed, causing the nervous system to be affected. Because signaling thoughts to the nervous system is for physical actions, if the signaling is done with an unusual condition, it will cause a biological effect.

Anger is not only a mental reality because the biological and the cognitive are linked and cannot be separated. (Hanh, 2001). Mind and body cannot be separated in Buddhism; they are interrelated. Just as whether wholesome or unwholesome consciousness may impact a physical body, in the same manner, a physical body covered with an unpleasant disease can affect the mind or consciousness. According to his view and concept, anger occurs due to the results of both physicality and mentality.

Buddhist teachings recognize anger as a cause of harm, and it stirs up mental turmoil. Mental turmoil fortifies the angry person to change the wrong direction, which is physical, verbal, and mental acts. Individuals do not perceive the peril of anger when their mind is consumed by anger. It seems possible to perceive the angry person as tormented when the anger has vanished. This is so much so that the Buddha said that the one who does not directly know and fully understand anger does not detach his mind from it, abandons it, and cannot destroy suffering. In converse, one who directly knows and fully understands anger detaches and leaves anger can eliminate suffering.

“Dosam, Bhikkave anabhijānam aparijānam tattha cittam avirājayam appajaham abhabbo dukkhakkhāya. Dosañca kho bhikkave, abhijānaṃ parijānaṃ tattha cittam pajahaṃ bhabbo dukkhakkhāyāti” (Kh. I. 6)

From the Buddhist psychological vision, anger is an impatient mind called a cognitive injury due to accepting what people do not like or rejecting what people do like; it means

eight worldly vicissitudes. In Buddhist scriptures, it is found that the mind is the forerunner of all mental states, and the mind is chief and the mind mode; if, with an impure mind, a person speaks or acts, suffering follows him, like the wheel that follows the foot of the ox. (Norman, 2000). Supporting the Buddhist statements, the mind plays a vital role, whether good or bad. No matter how people get angry if the anger is controlled with awareness, there is no chance of appearing angry.

The Factors Leading to Anger

In psychological concepts, anger is an emotional state of mind, but emotion alone is not enough to cause anger; when emotion is combined with events and triggering thoughts, anger arises. While everyone experiences negative thoughts very often, negative thinking seriously affects how you feel about yourself and the world. Thinking processes such as I am being mistreated, being disrespected, and being neglected are the traces contributing to a feeling. Anger consists of thought, and emotion arises from negative feelings. (Tafrate & Kassino, 2019). Feelings of anger arise due to how people think of themselves, see the world, and react to certain situations. Furthermore, sadness is an emotional pain characterized by unhappiness, grief, sorrow, low mood, and helplessness. Desolate emotions and sorrowful experiences change into negative feelings associated with anger. Just as sadness turns into depression, it can also lead to anger. For example, individuals who encounter family and friend relationship problems suffer sorrowful experiences, hopelessness, and disappointment. In the case of emotional processes, the abnormal bitter feeling associated with sadness is an angry emotion. The problems caused by family and friend relationships make the emotion of sadness.

Many mental health professionals today believe depression is one of the factors that cause anger. Anger and depression were not experienced simultaneously but were quite distinct from their basic emotions. Internal restlessness is a feeling involving anxiety, and depression is commonly assumed to be one factor contributing to anger. The anxiety stemming from the fear experienced in the mind leads to restlessness. For example, individuals who have experienced the feeling of dread will inevitably perceive nervousness because of fear associated with restlessness. Frightening feelings induce the mind to spread so much here; difficulty concentrating is considered a sign of restlessness. Undeniably, too much thinking makes restlessness, and the sense of restlessness leads to anger.

In Buddhist psychology, anger results from destructive emotions produced by harmful thought patterns. Destructive thoughts are injudicious attention (*ayonisomanasikāra*). People often behave or act aggressively due to their cognitive processes. The Buddha stated that those who do not possess such thoughts could not be appeased. “He abuses, strikes, overpowers, robs me”.

Akkocchi mam avadhi mam, ajini mam ahasi me,

ye ca tam upanayhanti, veram tesam na sammati. (Dhp. I. 3).

Thinking violently about hitting or beating someone or something is a trigger leading to anger. The mind is like an empty room; if managed with flowers, perfumes, and pleasant utensils, it will attract the people who enter it and create a nice feeling. If the space is stored with house rubbish and thrown with remnants or leftovers of food, it will be hated or distasted by those who enter the room. Similarly, if the mind is associated with reasonable attention, positive deeds that have not arisen and harmful deeds that have occurred will appear. Unskilful thoughts, such as thoughts of sensual pleasure and ill-will, are a form of inappropriate attention.

Furthermore, the factor leading to anger is the envious mind. The envious mind is an immoral mental factor that companions with consciousness rooted in hatred (*dosamūla citta*). According to Buddhist philosophy, the jealous mind is a psychological disease that causes anger. The Buddha stated clearly in the *Sakkapañha Sutta* that envy (*issā*) is the root cause of people's wrath. (Walshe 1995, 328). The exhaustion of other resources and lack of patience are characteristics of envy or jealousy. When one observes the accomplishments of others and their harmony, one begins to feel resentment and hostility toward that person. It may be true that the one mind destroyed by jealousy tries to lack the wealth of others and feel physiological and psychological suffering associated with irritation.

An envious mind is a form of jealousy in which a person admires another person's accomplishments, good fortune, wealth, belongings, and other traits from which they are deficient. The displeasure from jealousy cannot cultivate patience to treat somebody well and carry out something peacefully. Envy affects people, particularly those who share the same rank or status. For instance, a fish-paste vendor does typically not harbour or display jealousy toward a jeweller. However, given the competition, many fish paste vendors and

jewellers exhibit or feel jealousy toward one another. (Ashin Janakābhivansa 2004, 54). Envy or jealousy can arise with aversion because it is associated with consciousness rooted in anger or hatred.

The greedy mind is another mental factor that arises together with *dosa-mūla citta*. Whenever stinginess appears in the mind, there is anger as well. Anger (*dosa*) is always associated with an unpleasant feeling (*damanassavedanā*). According to Buddhist psychology, selfishness and niggardliness are all mental illnesses that result from an angry mind. Both *issā* and *macchariya* are regarded as the friends of anger because each arises with it. The Buddha said that the greedy mind causes irritation, and anger occurs due to meanness. To support those mentioned earlier, it seems clear that avarice results from like (*paiya*) and dislike (*apiya*). Like and dislike arise from desires owing to the desire they have appeared. By seeing it, people with this kind of consciousness never obtain the pleasant feeling that leads to a happy life. Anger caused by avarice or niggardliness harms self and others.

How evil induces remorse that is accompanied by anger as follows:

“Idha tappati pecca tappati, pāpakārī ubhayattha tappati,

Pāpaṃ me katanti tappati, bhiyyo tappati duggataṃ gato”. (Dhp. I. 17)

Those who are involved in evil and wrongdoing are tortured here and hereafter. Being born in a state of woe after death, the doer of evil keeps torturing himself more with the thought, ‘I have done an evil deed’. It is pretty apparent that an evildoer’s mind is never happy with the state of fear, and it is always associated with remorse, worry, and regret. The feeling of remorse induces angry emotion. Remorse is an unwholesome mental factor that arises together with ill will (*dosamūla citta*). The characteristic of remorse is grieving over the evil that is done and the good that is not done. When an evil deed has been done, it is usually followed by *kukkucca*. Remorse occurs as a result of malicious acts. It is repentance over wrong things done and right things neglected.

1. Buddhist Behavioral Changing Approach for Anger Management (*sīla*)

In Buddhist psychology, behavioral change for anger management is equivalent to morality, known as *sīla*. *Sīla*, associated with ethical conduct, is vital for behavioral modification. According to Buddhist precepts, conscientiously restraining bodily and verbal

behavior is synonymous with observing morality (*sīla*), aiming to avoid engaging in harmful actions. One can achieve inner calmness as *Sīla* practices avoiding physical and verbal excuses. (Ven.Pamokkha, and Moorti 2020, 367). In the behavioral approach, two pivotal challenges encompass: 1) Relaxation and 2) skilful communication. The research will thoroughly examine the following facets.

1) Relaxation: Threefold Purity of Bodily Behavior

Buddhist practice emphasises the mind, but to achieve this, one must also relax one's physical body because the mind and the body are interrelated and supported each other. The relaxation involving biological control, known as *kāya*, is considered a moral practice (*sīla*). The bodily conduct purity through relaxation delves into three core strategies: a) Non-Hurtful Behavior, which explores practices refraining from causing harm to oneself and others. b) Avoidance of What Is Not Provided: Investigating the path of contentment by refraining from pursuing or coveting what has not been rightfully provided. c) Refraining from Sexual Violence: Delving into the importance of respectful and ethical behavior within the sphere of sexual interactions.

The Buddha articulates non-hurtful behavior that fosters bodily relaxation by refraining from taking the lives of living beings. This formulation firmly grounds the abstention from killing in a compassionate attitude toward all living beings. A person abandons the killing of living beings (*pāṇātipāta*) with rod and weapon laid aside, conscientious and kind, he abides by compassion and is eager to help all living beings. (Payutto 2021, 1225). According to the first precept, compassionate abstention can take on three interrelated dimensions.

1. Abstaining from killing others oneself.
2. Encouraging others to do the same.
3. Advocating for this abstention through speech.

This understanding would give the path factor of right intention a broad scope of applicability. It is worth noting that the reference to non-ill-will and non-cruelty alongside right intention hints at the subtle difference between benevolence, the absence of ill-will, compassion, and lack of cruelty or harm. (Bhikkhu Analayo 2017,89-90).

Buddha's teachings emphasised kindness to avoid hurting oneself and others. Thus, I want to live; who does not want to die? I like to be happy and tremble from suffering. Since

this is so, if someone were to take my life, I wouldn't like that. But others also want to live and don't want to die; they like to be happy and recoil from pain. So, if I were to take the life of someone else, they would not like that either. Others also dislike the things that I dislike. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000,1917). Reflecting this way is the absence of violence and the presence of care, goodwill, mindfulness, and charity to ward off other beings. (S. V. 353)

In ethical conduct, purity involves refraining from taking what is not freely given, known as *adinnādāna*. This foundational principle goes beyond mere theft avoidance; it encompasses safeguarding oneself and others, the environment, and fostering societal harmony. Abandoning violent action teaches love, kindness, sympathy, and compassion. The Buddha illustrates the paths of non-harming that lead to bodily relaxation, encapsulated in the following guidance:

A person abandons taking what is not freely given (*adinnādānaveramani*) and abstains from that place; he does not carry with thievish intent the property of another, situated at home or in the forest. (Payutto 2021, 1225).

According to Buddhist psychology, refraining from appropriating others' property is a virtuous attitude that embodies compassion and selflessness. If someone were to take from me what I have not given, I would not be pleasing and agreeable to them. Now, if I were to take from another what he has yet to offer, he would not be pleasant and friendly to the other. Others also dislike the things that I dislike. By contemplating this way, individuals can foster empathy and a deeper understanding of the consequences of their actions.

Sexual misconduct is characterized by the intention, emerging through the physical senses, to intrude upon a woman without proper consent. In light of the facts, immoral sexual acts consist of four conditions: involving prohibited men or women, having the intention to engage in sexual misconduct, attempting to engage in sexual intercourse, and the actual occurrence of sexual intercourse. (Tiwary 1989, 84). Abandoning crime and violent action teaches love, kindness, sympathy, and compassion. The Buddha outlines non-harmful behaviors that promote physical relaxation techniques.

A person abandons sexual misconduct (*kāmesumicchācāra*) and abstains from that place; he does not violate women who are protected by their mother, father, brother, sister, or relatives, who are protected by the Dhamma, who have a husband, women who are off limits, even those who are engaged. (Payutto 2021, 1225).

According to Buddhist psychology, refraining from sexual violence is a good attitude that involves compassion and self-sacrifice. The way to practice self-purification through sympathy so as not to harm me and others is thus: If someone were to have sexual relations with my wife, I wouldn't like it. But if I were to have sexual relations with someone else's wife, he would not want that either. Reflecting in this way, they give up sexual misconduct themselves. By practising self-purification through sympathy and ethical conduct, individuals can cultivate a sense of respect and empathy towards others. (S. V. 353).

2) Right Communication Approach for Anger Management

Regarding non-harmful communication, four ways to right speech will be discussed here: a) truthful communication, b) harmonious communication, c) affectionate communication, and d) effective communication.

In Buddhism, truthful communication (*Saccaavācā*) encourages individuals to use kind, beneficial, and timely speech. Integrating this principle into communication during anger can prevent hurtful words and promote understanding. Honest communication, known as right speech (*saccavācā*), is virtuous conduct (*morality*) refraining from speaking what is not true (*musāvāda*) that involves outright lying and exaggerating the truth. Telling the truth, avoiding exaggeration, maintaining consistency, and using peaceful, non-violent communication help reduce personal and collective harm and suffering.

Buddhas' teachings describe right speech or truthful communication as factual and accurate. It affects others, and we care about that unless we are selfish or deluded. On the positive side, our speech can convey love and support or guide others in their spiritual journey. The Buddha explains in detail how someone abstains from false speech. If he does not know, he says, 'I do not know.' If he does know, he says, 'I know.' If he has not seen, he says, 'I have not seen.' If he has seen, he says, 'I have seen.' Thus, he does not consciously lie for his own sake, for the sake of another, or any reward. He speaks the truth, holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, and is no deceiver of the world. (Payutto 2021, 1226). In support of the above statement, the correct communication words do not cause distress in one's mind and strengthen the harmony between organisations.

The method given by the Buddha for reducing anger is harmonious communication (*apisunavācā*). The Buddha said, 'dependent on unmalicious speech, malicious speech should

be abandoned'. If I were to slander, I would surely blame myself for unethical conduct. Also, men with the wisdom to distinguish between cause and effect will scorn and blame me for my speech. Due to the result of unlawful speech, an unhappy destination would be expected after the breaking up of the body. In fact, malicious is a constraint and a hindrance.

From the above techniques for healing, one's emotion of anger, we can understand that harmonious speech originates from the mind to be ashamed (*hiri*) and fear (*ottappa*) of speaking a lousy word associated with wise intention (*yonisomanasikāra*). Here, having the right intention implies knowing not to say the speech that will not burn your heart or others. Buddhist harmonious communication offers a profound and transformative approach to anger management.

Affectionate communication (*saṇṇhāvācā*), which is the opposite of harsh speech (*pharusavācā*), is deemed one of the methods to heal anger. When we get angry, we may feel vilified. If we see people who do not have virtuous qualities and are not good, we should see the good aspects of their lives instead of criticising and speaking about them to others. (Katagiri, 2017, 222). Abusive speech is an unwholesome action with disagreeable results for oneself and others, both now and in the future, so it has to be restrained. The ideal antidote is patience, learning to tolerate blame and criticism from others, sympathising with their shortcomings, respecting differences in viewpoint, and enduring abuse without feeling compelled to retaliate. The Buddha calls for patience even under the most trying conditions:

“If someone were to attack me with harsh speech, I would not like it. But if I were to attack someone else with harsh speech, they wouldn't like it either.” (Sn V. 355).

The Buddha talks about patience and silence in moments of anger. We tend to believe hurtful words are less wrong than violent actions; sometimes, we may even find harsh words justifiable. However, according to Buddhism, hateful thoughts and hateful words lead to evil actions, and they support each other. The main points to consider are to avoid speech motivated by anger and ill will, learn to tolerate blame and criticism from others, respect differences in viewpoints, and endure abuse without a feeling of retaliation. Only then can an individual and a society be said to live in perfect harmony and peace. (Sharda, 2019, 35).

Effective communication is beneficial speech (*atthasamhitavācā*) that enhances positive emotional feelings and cures resentment. It is the opposite of idle talks or pointless

speech that lacks purpose or depth. Such speech communicates nothing of value but only stirs up the defilements in one's mind and others. The Buddha advises that idle talk should be curbed as much as possible and directed towards matters of genuine importance. In the case of a monk, his words should be selective and concerned primarily with the Dhamma. Lay persons will need affectionate small talk with friends and family, polite conversation with acquaintances, and talk about their line of work. But even they should be mindful not to let the conversation stray into pastures where the restless mind, always eager for something sweet or spicy to feed on, might find the chance to indulge its defiling propensities.

This virtuous communication contains empathy, compassion, and loving-kindness. Effective communication involving empathy can heal the distress of one's mind. Therefore, the Buddha said empathetic communication with the thought of kindness to die down anger is as follows. I would not like it if someone annoyed me by talking silliness and nonsense. But if I were to annoy someone else by talking silliness and nonsense, they would not want it either.' From the above techniques for healing anger, we can understand that effective speech originates from the mind of ashamed (*hiri*) and fear (*ottappa*), associated with wise intention.

2. Buddhist Cognitive Restructuring Approach for Anger Management (*samādhī*)

The cognitive restructuring approach is equivalent to concentration (*samādhi*). According to Buddhist psychology, five cognitive restructuring exercises cleanse the angry mind.

Replacement: If some unskilled thoughts associated with desire, aversion, or confusion disturb the mind, you should instead attend to another characteristic associated with what is skilled. This process resembles an experienced carpenter using a small peg to dislodge a larger one. The Buddha suggests that to disperse a negative thought, we must introduce a positive one. For instance, if you are contemplating someone who has hurt you, you can recall examples of their kindness instead of reinforcing negative stereotypes. If you suddenly have an irresistible desire to buy something you cannot afford, you can purchase a small present for somebody and replace greed with generosity. If you are waiting for someone late, instead of immediately thinking that this person has no respect for you, you can consider whether there is some reason for the delay.

Reflection on Results: The second method of dealing with disturbing thoughts is to examine the danger in these unskilled thoughts by thinking, 'These are incapable thoughts; these are thoughts with errors; indeed, these are thoughts with painful results. It is like a woman or a man, young and fond of adornment, who, if the carcass of a snake or a dog were hanging around their neck, would be revolted and disgusted and throw it away immediately as soon as they noticed it. If, while examining the danger in those thoughts, evil, unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion still arise, he should try to forget them and not pay attention to them. If replacing unskillful thoughts with skillful thoughts proves unsuccessful, the Buddha recommends that we contemplate the consequences of the unwholesome thought. We might ponder the effects of holding this unwise notion.

Redirecting Attention: The third method is to bring about forgetfulness and a lack of attention to those thoughts. It is like a man who, not wanting to see the material shapes within his range of vision, would close his eyes or look another way. This method goes against the general message of the Buddha, who tells us to be aware and mindful.

If the previous techniques cannot relax the troubling thought, the Buddha encourages redirecting attention away from the thought to something more wholesome. To clarify this technique, the Buddha uses the metaphor of averting one's gaze to avoid seeing particular objects. This method is familiar to meditators. When the mind has been distracted by thought, we return attention to the breath. Once again, meditation strengthens our ability to employ this technique. Restoring attention relies on the fundamental impermanence of reality to achieve success. Given its impermanent nature, if we can divert attention to more wholesome objects, the distracting thought will dissolve of its own accord. All things that arise must fall.

Reconstructing: The Buddhas' fourth technique is reconstructing and analyzing the formation of unskillful thought. In the second method, reflecting on results, we pursue the forward trajectory of such a thought. With reconstruction, we move in the other direction, examining the antecedents that gave rise to an unwholesome notion in the first place. If I have unkind thoughts towards another, I often see those thoughts emerge out of envy. Pursuing this insight further, I notice that my envy derives from a sense of personal inadequacy, which rests on the belief that this "I" is a substantial entity separate from the rest of reality. By systematically reconstructing the formation of an unwholesome thought, one can return it

to its antecedent causes and see how it is rooted in a false apprehension of reality. Such a process is often effective in rendering the thought harmless. (Muesse, 2001, 33).

Restraining: The fifth method the Buddha recommends is to subdue, restrain, and control the mind. It is like a strong man who, having taken hold of a weaker man by the head or the shoulders, might subdue, restrain, and dominate him. This might seem antithetical to the accepted psychology that you should not repress anything. If everything else fails and you continue to have disturbing and dangerous thoughts, then stop them with pure willpower. This is one of many methods. It is one of five to be applied when necessary.

The most assertive method for removing distracting thoughts is opposing the 'negative mind' with the 'positive mind'. As a final resort, the Buddha advises the yogi to clench her teeth and press her tongue against the roof of her mouth as she 'beats down, constrains, and crushes mind with mind.' The Buddha likens this technique to how a stronger individual might subdue and control a weaker one, metaphorically holding the other's head and shoulders. This analogy seems uncharacteristically brutal for the Buddha's teaching and might appear to be a rather inappropriate metaphor for "relaxing" thinking patterns. (Muesse, 2001, 33).

3. Buddhist Wisdom Approach for Anger Management (*paññā*)

Wisdom signifies the ability to perceive and comprehend our mental state when dealing with anger. It implies that knowing the true nature of the angry mind and its process is wisdom (*paññā*). Developing wisdom (*pañña*) is the highest ideal to eradicate anger. Wisdom has the characteristic of penetrating things according to their intrinsic nature. Its function is to illuminate the objective field like a lamp. It is manifested as non-bewilderment. Its proximate cause is wise attention. (Muesse, 2001, 33). This approach involves a deep understanding of anger and its various dimensions, which are discussed in three methods: understanding anger, anger types, and identifying the factors causing anger.

The approach delivered by the Buddha is that when the mind is afflicted with anger, one should recognise and acknowledge that 'My mind is associating angry mind. (D. II. 300). Furthermore, when one knows that anger is an imperfection that defiles the mind, he abandons it. It is considered an inner stain and an enemy, a foe lurking within one's psyche. It is described as an inner murderer, a destructive force that can lead to adversity and turmoil. The Buddhas' teachings caution against the dangers of anger, highlighting its ability to create

harm and agitation within the mind. Those consumed by anger often fail to recognise it as a danger from within. An angry person does not know what would lead to his well-being and has not realized the Dhamma. Overcome with anger; he is in total darkness. It presumes that knowing anger is an imperfection that defiles the mind. (M. I. 37; Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995).

1. Rational Attention (*yonisomanasikāra*)

Focusing on the positive aspects of a wrong person's actions or cultivating loving kindness can be effective techniques for managing anger. These techniques include 1) Emphasizing Verbal and Mental purity, 2) Emphasizing Bodily purity, 3) Acknowledging the moments of inner calm, 4) Cultivating Compassion, and 5) Celebrating Purity with Loving Kindness. (A. V. 187).

1. Emphasizing Verbal and Mental Purity: The first method of overcoming resentment deals with someone impure in deed but pure in speech. We are advised to attend only to the person's pure speech wisely, and the parable given is that of the dust-heap monk. Instead of harping on the person's negative quality here, impure bodily conduct, which would only pollute our minds, it is better to attend to his wholesome quality, pure verbal conduct. Just as the dust heap monk finds a piece of discarded cloth that carefully tears off only its good portion, we should only consider a person's wholesome conduct. There is a person whose verbal and mental action is pure but whose body behavior is impure. On that occasion, one should focus on purity rather than the impurity of physical behavior to cure resentment.

2. Emphasizing Bodily Purity: When confronted with a situation where a person's physical behavior is virtuous, but their verbal behavior is impure, the technique suggests shifting the focus away from their dirty speech and directing it towards the purity of their bodily actions. For instance, if a person gets angry with someone with a foul mouth but is blameless in his physical conduct, he has to forget the evil verbal behaviour, ponder over his good physical behavior, and thus try to appease anger. Imagine a thirsty traveler encountering a pond covered in algae and water plants. By cleansing the pond with their hands and drinking from their cupped palms, they demonstrate the significance of recognizing and appreciating bodily purity to quell anger.

3. Acknowledge the Moments of Inner Calm: In cases where a person's bodily and verbal behavior may be impure, but they occasionally experience moments of inner calm and

placidity of mind, it is advised not to fixate on their impurity. For example, suppose a person gets angry with a person who is evil in both verbal and physical conduct but displays good qualities from time to time. In that case, he has to give credit to these rare instances of showing good dispositions and trying to decrease his anger. Instead, please focus on the moments of mental clarity and peace they achieve sporadically. Suppose there is a little puddle in a cow's footprint, and a person comes along, burning with heat, covered with sweat, exhausted, trembling, and thirsty. The thought would occur to him: 'If I try to drink it with my cupped hands or a vessel, I will stir it up, disturb it, and make it undrinkable. Then he gets down on all fours, sucks the water up like a cow, and leaves on his way. This technique encourages recognizing and cherishing these moments of tranquility.

4. Cultivate Compassion: When a person's bodily and verbal behaviour are impure, and he does not gain from time to time an opening of the mind, on that occasion, one should arouse sheer compassion, sympathy, and tender concern for him thinking, 'Oh, may this person abandon bodily misbehavior and develop good physical, verbal, and mental action. When a person's bodily, oral, and cognitive behaviour is pure, one should attend to his pure bodily, speaking, and mental behaviour with loving-kindness. (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012, 774-6). Suppose a sick, ill person travels along a highway, and the last village behind him and the next town ahead of him are far away. He cannot obtain suitable food, medicine, and qualified attendants. On that condition, another man travelling along the highway might see him and arouse sheer compassion, sympathy, and tender concern for him, thinking, 'Oh, may this man obtain suitable food, medicine, a qualified attendant, may he get the leader of the village district. (A. V. 190).

5. Celebrate Purity with Loving Kindness: when encountering someone who consistently demonstrates purity in bodily, verbal, and mental behavior, they celebrate and nurture their purity with loving kindness. If a person is angry with another who is noble and good, he has to appreciate the noble and good qualities of the person concerned and dispel his anger. (Jenny Quek 2007, 114-5). Suppose there is a pond with clear, sweet, cool water, clean, smooth banks, and a delightful place shaded by various trees. A person is afflicted and oppressed by the heat, weary, thirsty, and dehydrated. Then, having plunged into the pond, he would bathe and drink, and then after coming out, he would sit or lie down in the shade of a tree right there. This approach effectively dissolves any anger that may arise.

2. Mindfulness Meditation to Manage Anger

Mindfulness is foundational for attaining Buddhist objectives and quelling the flames of anger. It facilitates knowing one's present emotional state of mind. (Chun 2019). It involves maintaining a vigilant awareness of one's current emotional state, encompassing thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. This practice, known as '*sati*', serves as a cornerstone in Buddhist psychology, resonating deeply with the idea of clear comprehension (*sampajañña*), equivalent to wisdom. (De Silva, 2014, 141).

The practice of mindfulness arises together with wisdom and has strength. Just as mindfulness without wisdom is weak, wisdom without mindfulness does not exist. A person without mindfulness is not able to use recollection (*anupassanā*). Therefore, the mention of '*sati*' always refers to wisdom (*paññā*). The wisdom intertwined with mindfulness in daily life is often called 'clear comprehension'. For example, when someone becomes angry, they simultaneously recognize the reasons and factors for their anger mindfully. Clear comprehension of the object or the actions without coating it with preferences and aversions. Notably, this clear comprehension is closely linked to restraint (*samvara*) and the subsequent relinquishing of emerging negative emotions (*pahāna*).

Furthermore, individuals can establish a healthy breathing pattern by engaging in mindfulness exercises, such as observing one's breath during meditation. Rather than merely dealing with impulsive reactions after the fact, cultivating mindfulness empowers proactive intervention. Paul Ekman, a distinguished scholar in emotion studies, notes that it is harder to be attentive and mindful when angry. Still, if we have cultivated mindfulness, we can step back and choose how to respond. For instance, one may try to understand the person who provoked you and excuse him. In Buddhism, mindfulness meditation can be helpful for anger management.

Conclusions

This study underscores the multifaceted nature of anger and the profound impact it can have on an individual's well-being and relationships. Firstly, anger is understood as an emotional state ranging from mild irritation to intense fury. When unchecked, it can deteriorate a person's overall quality of life, affecting both personal and professional relationships. In Buddhist psychology, anger is viewed as a destructive force that not only harms the individual

but also those around them. It is likened to a great fire, capable of devastating the natural clarity and beauty of the mind.

Secondly, psychology identifies trigger events, negative thoughts, sadness, and restlessness as the primary causes of anger. In Buddhist psychology, injudicious attention, envy, jealousy, and remorse - considered defilements of the mind - are recognized as the root causes. Anger clouds the mind, impairing judgment and harming both the self and others.

Lastly, the Buddhist psychological approach to anger management in the contemporary world begins with behavioral change, focusing on relaxation techniques and improved communication. Cognitive restructuring then helps replace negative thoughts with positive ones, while the wisdom approach integrates understanding, rational attention (*yonisomanasikāra*), and mindfulness meditation. These strategies provide individuals with the tools to effectively manage anger, fostering emotional balance, mental clarity, and personal growth.

Abbreviations

A. V : Anguttara Nikaya

D. II : Digha Nikaya - Samaññaphala Sutta

Dhp : Dhammapada

M. I. : Majjhima Nikaya - Mulapariyaya Sutta

S. V. : Samyutta Nikaya

Sn V. : Samyutta Nikaya

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