

The Skill of Controlling Anger

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Cynicism is one of the major risk factors for causation of coronary artery disease (blockages in the channels supplying blood to the heart). And anger, jealousy and irritability form the triad responsible for this.

Anger is the enemy of peace, knowledge and devotion. According to Ayurveda, anger is a manifestation of Pitta (metabolism) imbalance and is a predisposing risk factor for causation of heart attack, paralysis, gallbladder stone, kidney stone, acidity, ulcer and cancer.

In Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna describes the pathway of anger leading to destruction in Chapter 2 Shloka 62 and 63. According to Lord Krishna, when a man's desires are not fulfilled or expectations are not met, one becomes angry. And when one is under the effect of anger, he does all types of sinful activities. One loses the distinction between good and bad, loses one's memory, the understanding becomes clouded, and the intellect gets perverted. Loss of intellect leads to animal-like behavior, and ultimately to destruction of oneself.

Anger can have several repercussions, which are injustice, rashness, persecution, jealousy, taking possession of others' property, killing, using harsh words and cruelty. The degree of anger may vary from irritation, frowning, resentment, indignation, rage, fury and wrath.

Anger is not always bad. It is only when the anger is an outcome of greed or selfish motives, it is bad.

Righteous or spiritual anger is a type of anger caused with good intentions. This anger passes off the next moment as a wave subsides in the sea. The classical example of righteous anger is when you become angry in a situation where you see a person doing something wrong to check that person. The root cause of anger is ignorance, egoism and passion (strong desires), with passion being the root cause. To control anger, therefore, passion should be controlled first.

In Vedic language, both anger and passion are Rajas-Vriti disorders and get exaggerated with any Rajas-increasing lifestyle. Living a life with fewer Rajas characteristics will reduce the chances of anger.

Rajas-increasing foods are eggs, fish, onion, garlic, fermented foods, etc. Indulging into modern fashion, night clubs, reading novels with stories of violence, living in the company of bad people, use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs are all Rajas-increasing lifestyles. A typical Rajasik person indulges in eating, drinking and procreating.

Controlling anger and passion involves effort. As a fish swims upstream against the current in a river to breathe, so does a person has to work against the disturbed thoughts. To balance and stabilize the mind, consuming 'satvik' foods like fresh food, vegetables, milk and barley bread will help.

Many exercises can help control anger. A few suggested ones are observing silence for 20-30 minutes in a day, walking regularly, practicing speaking kind words; doing regular meditation, practicing nonviolent communication daily and learning to think differently.

During an episode of anger, one can try left nostril pranayama, a short deep breathing exercise, taking a walk, drinking cold or simple water or chanting AUM or I AM. With inspiration one chants "I" and with expiration "AM" reminding one who I AM. That I am the expression of pure spirit and my purpose of life is not to become angry. Remember, the person who gets angry will have high blood pressure. On whom you are angry may have no change in blood pressure.

One should realize that during anger, one loses the power of discrimination and suffers from intellectual impairment. Therefore, anger has to be controlled much before it becomes full blown. The initial stage of anger is irritability, and therefore, with the onset of irritability, one should try to control it at the earliest.

Never judge an individual with your own level of perception. You should realize that if a servant starts working with your level of expectations, he or she will not be working with you as a servant. Also make sure that you are not hungry at the time of feeling angry or irritable. Regular meals prevent development of anger.

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Anger can be expressive or suppressive. Expressive anger presents with aggressive behavior and the outbursts of anger can cause social unhealthiness. It can cause sudden rise in upper blood pressure or cause rupture of a plaque in the artery supplying blood to the heart precipitating a heart attack.

Suppressive anger can lead to acidity, asthma, formation of plaques in the heart arteries, etc. In the long run, suppressed anger, if not expressed may end up with depression, despondency, guilt, etc.

Therefore, anger should neither be passed on to others (expressive) nor taken within (suppressed or repressed). Anger, therefore, should be altered, neutralized or modified. This can be done by temporarily holding it for some time and then taking timely action. Temporary holding can be achieved by using the above exercises. Remember both passion and anger are energies, which should be conserved and not wasted.

The mythological explanation of Shiva, the Neelkanth, is also the same. Neither throw the poison (anger), nor drink it but keep it in the throat for some time and take the right action after the anger manifestations are over.

From Vedic point of view, every thought arises from the silent potential web of energized information or consciousness. This thought from the mind is then analyzed by the intellect and then modified by the ego. At this stage, it leads to an action. An action leads to memory and memory leads to desire for the action again. If this desire is fulfilled, it leads to action again and then desire again. Repeated fulfillment of desires leads to habit formation, addictions and development of a particular personality. An unfulfilled desire leads to irritability and irritability leads to anger, which then can be expressive or suppressive.

The answer, therefore, lies in changing the perception at the level of thought or controlling desires and/or expectations.



Pesco-Mediterranean Diet, Fasting Promising to Reduce CVD

A Pesco-Mediterranean diet that consists of plants, legumes, nuts, whole grains, extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO), moderate amounts of dairy products and fish and/or seafood, along with intermittent fasting (time-restricted eating), can potentially limit the risk for cardiovascular disease, suggests a new review. The authors propose that following a Pesco-Mediterranean diet in association with time-restricted eating is evidence-based and an ideal approach for reducing cardiovascular risk. The authors stated that under time-restricted eating (a type of intermittent fasting), the daily intake of food is limited to a window of time, usually 6-12 hours a day. The review was published online in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology...* (Medscape)

Parkinson's Disease and COVID-19

There appears to be no robust evidence that having Parkinson's disease heightens the likelihood of COVID-19, or that COVID-19 predisposes to a greater risk of Parkinson's disease. However, there have been reports of worsening Parkinson's symptoms in infected patients, suggested K Ray Chaudhuri, MD, DSc, of King's College London in England.

A community-based case-control study involving 12 cases in Italy pointed to considerable worsening of symptoms in Parkinson's patients with mild-to-moderate COVID-19, independent of age and disease duration. Patient survey data suggested that most individuals with Parkinson's disease and COVID-19 experience new or worsening motor and non-motor symptoms. The survey findings were published in the *Journal of Parkinson's Disease...* (Medpage Today)

US Signs Agreement with AstraZeneca for Development and Supply of COVID-19 Antibody Treatment

The US government has signed an agreement with AstraZeneca Plc AZN.L for the development and supply of around 1,00,000 doses of COVID-19 antibody treatment, a similar class of drugs that has been used for the treatment of President Donald Trump. Funding will be provided to AstraZeneca by the US health agency for two Phase 3 clinical trials under operation Warp Speed. The operation aims to expedite treatments and vaccines for COVID-19. One of the trials will assess the safety and efficacy of the experimental treatment to prevent infection for up to 12 months, in nearly 5,000 participants, while the second one will investigate post-exposure preventative and pre-emptive treatment in around 1,100 participants... (Reuters)