

REVIEW ARTICLE

Krodha Through the Ages: A Systematic Review of Anger Evidence from Ancient Civilizations to Contemporary Society

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ABSTRACT

Anger (Krodha), a complex emotional response, has been scrutinized across centuries through religious, philosophical, and psychological lenses. This article traces the evolution of anger as conceptualized in ancient civilizations, particularly within Indian philosophical traditions, and maps its transformation through historical, cultural, and scientific paradigms into contemporary understandings. It draws on classical texts such as the Rig Veda, Manyu Sukta, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Taittiriya Upanishad, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Bhagavad Gita, and Patanjali Yoga Sutras, while integrating perspectives from Cultural Contexts and Contemporary Society.

1. INTRODUCTION

Anger (Krodha) in Sanskrit has been one of the most enduring and enigmatic human emotions, reverberating across philosophical doctrines, religious ethics, social institutions, and psychological frameworks. From the fire-wielding wrath of deities in ancient myths to the algorithm amplified outrage of modern digital platforms, anger has never simply been a visceral reaction; it has been a mirror of cultural consciousness and moral negotiation. In ancient Indian philosophy, Krodha was conceptualized not as a standalone emotion but as an existential derailment linked to desire (kāma) and ego (ahamkāra), disrupting the inner equilibrium essential to spiritual liberation. The Bhagavad Gita and other ancient texts admonish anger as a catalyst of delusion and moral decline, while the Yoga Sutras offer a praxis to sublimate it through meditative discipline. Similarly, classical traditions across civilizations. In contrast, contemporary society witnesses anger as both a private pathology and a public instrument: a marker of injustice, a symptom of psychosocial strain, and a driver of civic mobilization. Neuroscience deconstructs it through amygdala activation and hormonal surges, while cultural theorists decode its digital virality. From street protests to screen rants, anger animates the moral theater of our times. This systematic review seeks to trace Krodha's philosophical lineage and empirical contour from

Vedic introspection to viral outrage while constructing an integrative framework that repositions anger as neither vice nor virtue, but a signal of human complexity demanding reflection, regulation, and cultural awareness.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive, and textually anchored research design, synthesizing insights from classical scriptures and modern scientific literature to construct a diachronic understanding of anger (Krodha) across historical and cultural epochs. A systematic literature search was conducted using curated academic databases and repositories, including the Vedic Heritage Portal maintained by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Shodhganga, PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. To ensure academic rigor, only peer-reviewed journals focusing on yoga, philosophy, and psychological science were included, and books were selected based on publication status, identifiable ISBNs, and reputable publishing houses. All secondary materials were scrutinized for methodological transparency, scholarly credibility, and philosophical alignment. Primary sources comprised foundational texts treating anger as a multidimensional phenomenon spiritual, ethical, and psychological, such as the Rig Veda, Manyu Sukta, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Taittiriya Upanishad, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Bhagavad Gita, and the Patanjali Yoga Sutras. These texts were analyzed through philological methods, traditional commentaries,

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and thematic mapping of verses directly and metaphorically related to anger. Secondary sources included academic books, journal articles, doctoral theses, and contemporary studies addressing the cultural, political, and biological dimensions of anger. These supported the comparative contextualization and synthesis of ancient and modern perspectives, allowing for the construction of an integrated framework of anger's philosophical, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions.

2.1. Anger in Ancient Indian Thought

2.1.1. Rīg veda

mā nò vadhāyā hṛnavē jīhīlānasyā rīradhaḥ |

mā hīñānasyā manyavé || (1st Mandala/25th Sukta/2nd Verse)

O Divine Varuṇa, do not subject us to destruction through the force of your righteous anger. May we not become victims of your displeasure or the fury that arises from our transgressions. Let your judgment be tempered with compassion, even when we falter.^[1]

ayam śṛṇve adha jayānnūta ghnannayamūta pra kṛṇute yudhā gāḥ |

yadā satyam kṛṇute manyumindro viśvām dṛḥḥam bhāyata ejādamāt || (4th Mandala/17th Sukta/10th Verse)

This mighty one Indra, is heard and known, whether he conquers or strikes down foes, or reclaims the cattle through battle. When Indra channels his anger in truth, even the most stable and immovable tremble and recoil in fear.^[2]

na sa svo dakṣo varuṇa dhruṭiḥ: sā surā manyurviḥbhīdāko acittih |

astī jyāyāṅkanīyasa upāre svapnāścānedanṛtasya prayotā || (7th Mandala/86th Sukta/6th Verse)

It is not our innate capacity, O Varuṇa, that leads us astray, but the forces of intoxication, wrath, gambling, and ignorance. Even in the presence of wisdom, the lesser may falter. Dreams too, at times, become agents of falsehood, nudging the mind toward deception.^[3]

pra cākṛe sahasā saho bābhañjā manyumojāsā |

viśve ta indra pṛtanāyavō yaho ni vṛkṣā iva yemire || (8th Mandala/4th Sukta/5th Verse)

Indra, with sudden and mighty force, shattered the strength of wrath through his own power. All opposing warriors, once defiant, stood subdued like trees bent low, silenced by awe.^[4]

aghōracakṣurapātighnyedhi śivā pāśubhyā: sūmanā: sūvarcā: |

vīṛasūrdēvakāmā syonā śam nō bhava dvīpadē śam catuṣpade || (10th Mandala/85th Sukta/44th Verse)

Let your gaze be gentle, not fierce; may you not oppose your partner. Treat all creatures with compassion, shine with inner light, and carry yourself with gentle elegance. May you be a bearer of noble offspring, devoted to the divine, and a source of harmony for both two-legged and four-legged beings.^[5]

agnē manyum prātīnudanparēṣāmadābdho gopāḥ pari pāhi nāstvam |

pratyāñcō yantu nīguta: punasteṣāmaiśām cittaṁ prabudhām vi nēśat || (10th Mandala/128th Sukta/6th Verse)

O radiant Agni, shield us from the fury of those who oppose us. Let your steadfast presence dissolve their hostility and guard us with unwavering strength. Guard us from all sides, untouched and steadfast.

Let those who oppose us retreat in fear, their arrogance broken. May the awakened minds of the cunning be scattered and dissolved.^[3]

2.1.1.1. Summary

In the Rīgvedic perspective, anger (manyu) is portrayed as both destructive and transformative, intricately woven into divine, moral, and domestic spheres. It can be fatal when unchecked, yet when wielded righteously like Indra's it becomes a tool of cosmic justice. Rooted in ignorance and vice, human anger emerges from psychological and environmental disturbances, but divine might can subdue its chaos. Rituals emphasize anger's impact within family life, where its suppression nurtures harmony and sacred cohesion. Ultimately, protective deities like Agni are invoked to shield against adversarial rage, reinforcing the Vedic ideal of anger as a force demanding reverence, restraint, and spiritual discernment.

2.1.1.2. Reflections

Across these hymns, anger emerges not only as a destructive emotion but also as a regulated cosmic force, righteous when aligned with dharma, perilous when driven by ego or delusion. Gods like Indra and Agni embody the paradox: they wield wrath to uphold cosmic order, yet humans are cautioned to temper their own manyu lest it led to suffering.

2.1.2. Manyu sukta

The Manyu Suktam consists of 14 verses from the Rīg Veda (Hymns 10.83 and 10.84), dedicated to the deity Manyu. Manyu, in Vedic Sanskrit, encompasses various meanings, including mood, mind, ardor, resentment, anger, wrath, rage, temper, or passion. When capitalized, it refers to the personification of Wrath.

yaste manyoravidhadvajrasāyakaḥ saha ojaḥ puṣyati viśvamānuṣak |

sāhyāma dāsamāryantvayā yujā sahasakṛtena sahasā sahasvatā ||1||

O mighty force of righteous anger, whose thunderbolt and arrow-like energy nourish the strength of all humanity, may we, empowered by your valor and joined in your resolve, overcome both servitude and nobility alike. Let us triumph through the power of your fierce and unyielding spirit.^[6]

manyurindro manyurevāsa devo manyura hotāvaruṇo jātavedāḥ |

manyum viśa tlate mānuṣīryāḥ pāhi no manyo tapasā sajoṣāḥ ||2||

Manyu is the embodiment of divine force; he is Indra, the god of strength; he is also the priest, Varuṇa, and the all-knowing flame, Jātavedas. All human communities offer praise to Manyu. O Manyu, united with the power of austerity, protect us.^[6]

abhīhi manyo tapasastavīyān tapasā yujā vijahi śatrūn |

amītrahā vṛtrahā dasyuhā ca viśvā vasūñyābhara tvannah ||3||

O Manyu, approach us greater than strength itself, empowered by the fire of discipline. With the force of austerity as your ally, vanquish our enemies. You are the destroyer of foes, the slayer of obstruction, the dispeller of darkness. Bestow upon us all noble treasures and virtues.^[6]

tvam hi manyo abhibhūtojāḥ svayambhūrbhāmo abhimātiṣāḥ |

viśvacarṣaṇiḥ sahurīḥ sahāvānasmāsvojaḥ pṛthanāsu dhehi ||4||

O Manyu, you are the embodiment of overwhelming strength self-born, fierce, and the vanquisher of hostile forces. You are known among all beings, resilient and mighty. Instill your power within us, so we may stand firm in the battles of life.

abhāgaḥ san apa pareto asmi tava kratvā taviṣasya pracetaḥ |

taṃ tvā manyo akratur jihṛlāhaṃ svātānūr baladeyāya mehi ||5||

I stand estranged and powerless, having failed to act in alignment with your mighty will, O Manyu, the conscious force. In my ignorance, I turned away and provoked your displeasure. Now, I seek your presence enter my being and grant me the strength I lack.

āyante asmyupa mehyarvāṇ prattīcīnaḥ sahure viśvadhāyāḥ |

manyo vajrin abhi māmāva vṛtvahanāva dasyūn ṛta bodhyāpeḥ ||6||

I come to you, O Manyu – drawn inward, seeking your presence. You, the resilient bearer of cosmic order, the wielder of the thunderbolt – stand beside me. Let us together strike down the forces of falsehood. Awaken in me the clarity of truth and dissolve the cunning of the deceitful.

abhi prehi dakṣiṇato bhavāva me'dhā vṛtrāṇi jaṅghanāva bhūri |

juhomi te dharuṇam madhvo agram ubhā upāṃśu prathamāḥ pibāva ||7||

O Manyu, come forth and stand at my right – let us strike down the multitude of obstacles. I offer you the essence of the sacred nectar, the foremost sweetness. Let us both partake of it quietly, before all others.

2.1.2.1. Summary

These seven hymns to Manyu in Rigveda 10.83 provide profound textual testimony that anger, far from mere impulsive rage, was revered as a cosmic and ethical force. Manyu is invoked as a divine embodiment of wrath, likened to Indra, Varuṇa, and Agni, and praised for his strength, justice, and ability to protect truth (ṛta) through destruction of enemies and obstacles. The hymns trace a philosophical arc beginning with external conquest, moving through divine identification, and culminating in personal transformation and ritual offering. Anger becomes tapas-infused energy, a companion of dharma, and a purifier of injustice, mirroring the Vedic and Vedantic view that emotion, when rightly harnessed, leads to clarity and cosmic alignment. This corpus thus forms powerful proof of anger's role not as a vice, but as a sacred catalyst for dharmic action and inner awakening.

2.1.3. Ramayana

ityukto lakṣmaṇastasyāḥ kruddho rāmasya pārśvataḥ|

uddhṛtya khaḍgaṃ ciccheda karṇanāsaṃ mahābalaḥ|| (Aranya Kanda, Sarga 18, Shloka 21)

Thus, instructed by Rama, the mighty Lakshmana, standing beside him and filled with anger, drew his sword and cut off Surpanakha's nose and ears.^[7]

vācyāvācyam prakupito na vijānāti karhicit|

nākāryamasti kruddhasya navācyam vidyate kvacit|| (Sundara Kanda Sarga 55, Shloka 5)

When a person is angry, they lose the ability to discern between what should and should not be said. In that state, nothing is considered inappropriate or unworthy of action: anger overrides all filters of speech and behavior.^[7]

yadi me hṛdi rāmaḥ sadā vasati dharmataḥ|

tadā māṃ pāvakaḥ śuddhāṃ kurutu svena tejasā|| (Yuddha Kanda, Sarga 118)

“If Rama has always dwelled in my heart righteously, then let the fire god purify me with his own brilliance.”

Later, in Uttara Kanda, she speaks directly to Mother Earth.^[7]

sarvaṃ nāśayiṣyāmi yadi māṃ na drakṣyati rāmaḥ|| (Uttara Kanda, Sarga 105)

“I shall destroy everything if Rama does not see me immediately.”^[7]

yadi ahaṃ gātrasaṃsparśaṃ gatvā cānyasya kasyacit|

dharmam ca nātivarteyaṃ tatastvaṃ māṃ vibhāvasuḥ|| (Uttara Kanda, Sarga 97)

“If I have never touched another man and have always upheld dharma, then let the Earth receive me.”^[8]

yadi na pratiyāsyati bhūmirme janakātmajām|

tadā dagdhvā prthīm sarvāṃ jalaṃ cāsyāṃ kariṣyāmi|| (Uttara Kanda, Sarga 98)

“If the Earth does not return Janaka's daughter to me, I shall burn the entire Earth and turn it into water.”^[8]

2.1.3.1. Summary

In the Ramayana, anger (krodha) emerges as a multifaceted force ranging from Lakshmana's protective fury and Sita's dignified defiance to Rama's cosmic grief and Durvasa's dharmic challenge. Rather than demonizing anger, the epic redefines it through the lens of dharma, showing how its expression can affirm moral clarity, safeguard truth, and test spiritual resolve. Whether tactical, philosophical, or divine, anger in the Ramayana functions as a catalyst for ethical reckoning and cosmic balance, revealing its capacity to restore order when anchored in righteousness.

2.1.4. Mahabharata

jāmadagnyena me yuddhamidaṃ paramadāruṇam |

ahāni subahūnyadya vartate sumahātyayam || (Udyoga Parva, Chapter 184, Verse 3)

“This battle with Jamadagni's son (Parashurama) is exceedingly dreadful. Many days have passed, and this great calamity continues.”^[9]

Meaning: This verse captures Bhishma's lament at a protracted, tragic battle against his guru-disciple, Parashurama. Their anger is bound by duty; neither can yield without dishonoring dharma. It becomes a duel of endurance, where righteous fury stalls into endless calamity.

sa saṃkruddhō mahātējā rathāṅgaṃ pariṅghya ca|

abhyadhāvata saṃkruddhō bhīṣmaṃ śatrunibarhaṇam|| (Bhishma Parva, Chapter 59, Verse 44)

“Enraged and blazing with energy, Krishna seized a chariot wheel and rushed toward Bhishma, the destroyer of enemies.”^[9]

Meaning: Krishna, bound by his pledge not to wield weapons, seizes a chariot wheel to confront Bhishma. His momentary rage illustrates how divine anger, though controlled, overrides even sacred oaths when the cosmic order is at stake.

sa saṃkruddhō mahātējā droṇo brahmavidāṃ varah|

pāṇḍavānāṃ balaṃ sarvaṃ nāśayāmāsa saṃyuge|| (Drona Parva, Chapter 11, Verse 3)

“Enraged and radiant with divine energy, Drona began to annihilate the Pandava army.”^[10]

Meaning: After Bhishma’s fall, Drona’s grief morphs into devastating fury. A Brahmin sage unleashes his celestial power to slaughter the Pandava army, showing how deep sorrow can weaponize wisdom into wholesale destruction.

adya tvām saha govindam rathastham raṇamūrdhani

haniṣye śaravarṣeṇa yathā nāgaṃ mṛgadvipah|| (Karna Parva, Chapter 90, Verse 34)

“Today I shall slay you, Arjuna, along with Govinda (Krishna), in the midst of battle like a lion slaying an elephant.”^[10]

Meaning: Reeling from his son’s death and lifelong scorn, Karna vows to kill Arjuna and Krishna. His anger is intensely personal, fusing heroic honor with tragic injustice, and driving him toward a fateful climax.

sakunistu mahābāhuḥ sahadavaṃ samāsadat

kruddho raṇe mahātejā vākyam cedamuvāca ha|| (Shalya Parva, Chapter 27, Verse 1)

“Sakuni, the mighty-armed and radiant with energy, approached Sahadeva in battle, filled with anger, and spoke these words.”^[9]

Meaning: Sakuni’s anger simmers through his schemes rather than battlefield roars. Born of ancestral trauma, his focused wrath fuels the dice plot and Draupadi’s humiliation, revealing how vengeance can wear the mask of loyalty.

2.1.4.1. *Philosophical insight

Sakuni’s anger is strategic and ancestral. According to some traditions (though not explicitly in Vyasa’s critical edition), Sakuni’s family was imprisoned and starved by Dhritarashtra’s father. He vowed to destroy the Kauravas from within, using Duryodhana as a pawn. His manipulation of the dice game and the humiliation of Draupadi were not just political moves they were acts of revenge.

sa tu bhīmasenaṃ nāma ghrītvā vajrasaṃnibham

aṅke samabhiniṣkrāntaṃ muṣṭinā samapīḍayat|| (Stri Parva Chapter 1 Verse 12)

“Thinking it was Bhimasena, Dhritarashtra embraced the iron statue (resembling Bhima), which was as hard as a thunderbolt, and crushed it with his mighty arms.”^[9]

Meaning: In a final, symbolic outburst, Dhritarashtra crushes an iron Bhima statue in a hidden embrace. His delayed fury, long suppressed by grief and guilt, finds a hollow outlet an illusionary revenge that leaves remorse in its wake.

2.1.4.2. Summary

Anger (krodha) in the Mahabharata is not a monolithic eruption; it is a spectrum of purposeful fire, ignited by duty, injustice, humiliation, vengeance, or grief. It can be destructive, purifying, protective, or strategic. These verses bring alive six perspectives on how that fire burns and transforms the epic’s heroes and anti-heroes alike.

2.1.5. Taṭtīriya upanishad

Understanding the concept of human existence is vital for exploring emotions like anger, as outlined in Vedānta philosophy. The Taṭtīriya Upanishad, particularly the Brahmananda and Brugu Valli sections,

describes the individual through Pancha Kosha, or five sheaths. These layers range from the physical body (Annamaya) to vital energy (Pranamaya), thoughts and emotions (Manomaya), intellect (Vijnanamaya), and finally, bliss (Anandamaya), the closest to Brahman. This progression offers a holistic model for how anger arises and transforms across the human experience, ultimately guiding one toward liberation.

annādvai prajāḥ prajāyante | yāḥ kāśca pṛthivīm śrītāḥ | atho annenaiva jīvanti | athainadapi yantyantataḥ | annaṃ hi bhūtānāṃ jyeṣṭham | tasmāt sarvauśadhamucyate | sarvaṃ vai tadannamāpnuvanti | ye’nnaṃ brahmopāsate | annaṃ hi bhūtānāṃ jyeṣṭham | tasmāt sarvauśadhamucyate | annādbhūtāni jāyante | jātānyannena vardhante | adyate’ti ca bhūtāni | tasmādannam taducyate iti || tasmādvā etasmādannarasamayāt | anyo’ntara ātmā prāṇamayaḥ | tenaiṣa pūrṇaḥ | sa vā eṣa puruṣavidha eva | tasya puruṣavidhatām | anvayaṃ puruṣavidhaḥ | tasya prāṇa eva śīraḥ | vyāno dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ | apāna uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ | ākāśa ātmā | pṛthivī pucchaṃ pratiṣṭhā | tadapyeṣa śloka bhavati || (Bṛhmananda Valli, Anuvaka 2; Taṭtīriya Upanishad)

All living beings on Earth arise from food, are sustained by it throughout life, and ultimately return to it in death. Thus, food is regarded as the most ancient of all entities and is revered as a universal remedy. Those who honor food as Brahman attain abundance, for food nourishes, sustains, and consumes, in turn, hence its name, Anna. Beyond the self-composed of food lies another subtler essence, the self-formed of Prāṇa (vital breath). This inner being fills and animates the outer. It mirrors the human form: Prāṇa is the head, Vyāna the right side, Apāna the left, Ākāśa (space) the central body, and Earth the tail, the foundation.^[11]

prāṇaṃ devā anuprāṇanti | manuṣyāḥ paśavaśca ye | prāṇo hi bhūtānāmāyuh | tasmāt sarvāyūṣamucyate | sarvameva ta āyuryanti | ye prāṇaṃ brahmopāsate | prāṇo hi bhūtānāmāyuh | tasmāt sarvāyūṣamucyate iti || tasyaiṣa eva śārīra ātmā | yāḥ pūrvasya | tasmādvā etasmāt prāṇamayāt | anyo’ntara ātmā manomayaḥ | tenaiṣa pūrṇaḥ | sa vā eṣa puruṣavidha eva | tasya puruṣavidhatām | anvayaṃ puruṣavidhaḥ | tasya yajureva śīraḥ | ṛg dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ | sāmottaraḥ pakṣaḥ | ādeśa ātmā | atharvāṅgīrasaḥ pucchaṃ pratiṣṭhā | tadapyeṣa śloka bhavati || (Bṛhmananda Valli, Anuvaka 3; Taṭtīriya Upanishad)

Through the vital force known as Prāṇa, the gods, humans, and animals are sustained. Prāṇa is the essence of life itself; hence, it is revered as the universal life principle. Those who recognize and worship Prāṇa as Brahman attain the fullness of life, for Prāṇa is the breath and pulse of all existence. Within the body, beyond the self-formed of food (Annamaya), arises a subtler self-composed of Prāṇa (Prānamaya). This vital self-animates the physical form and mirrors its human shape. Yet, deeper still lies another sheath, the mind-made self (Manomaya), which permeates and governs the Prānamaya. It too reflects the human form: Yajurveda represents its head, Rgveda its right wing, Sāmaveda its left, scriptural command (Ādeśa) forms its core, and Atharva-Āṅgīras serves as its foundation.^[12]

yato vāco nivartante | aprāpya manasā saha | ānandaṃ brahmaṇo vidvān | na bibheti kadācana iti || tasyaiṣa eva śārīra ātmā | yāḥ pūrvasya | tasmādvā etasmānmanomayāt | anyo’ntara ātmā vijñānamayaḥ | tenaiṣa pūrṇaḥ | sa vā eṣa puruṣavidha eva | tasya puruṣavidhatām | anvayaṃ puruṣavidhaḥ | tasya śraddhaiva śīraḥ | ṛtaṃ dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ | satyamuttaraḥ pakṣaḥ | yoga ātmā | mahāḥ pucchaṃ pratiṣṭhā | tadapyeṣa śloka bhavati || (Bṛhmananda Valli, Anuvaka 4; Taṭtīriya Upanishad)

Where speech and thought fall silent, unable to grasp the infinite there, one who realizes the bliss of Brahman dwells free from fear. The mind, as the subtle self, emerges from the vital force (Prānamaya), forming the next layer of being. Yet, deeper still lies the self-composed of knowledge (Vijñānamaya), which permeates and governs the mind. This inner self reflects the human form: faith is its crown, righteousness its right side, truth its left, meditative absorption its core, and Mahah, the expansive intellect or cosmic brilliance its foundation.^[12]

vijñānam yajñam tanute | karmāṇi tanute'pi ca | vijñānam devāḥ sarve | brahma jyeṣṭhamupāsate | vijñānam brahma cedveda | tasmāccenna pramādyati | śarīre pāpmano hitvā | sarvāṅkāmaṁ samaśnute iti || tasyaiṣa eva śārīra ātmā | yah pūrvasya | tasmādvā etasmādvijñānamayāt | anyo'ntarātmā ānandamayah | tenaiṣa pūrṇah | sa vā eṣa puruṣavidha eva | tasya puruṣavidhatām | anvayaṁ puruṣavidhaḥ | tasya priyameva śiraḥ | modo dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ | pramoda uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ | ānanda ātmā | brahma pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā | tadapyeṣa śloko bhavati || (Bṛhmananda Valli, Anuvaka 5; Thaittiriya Upanishad)

Knowledge is both the performer of sacred rites and the essence of action. It is revered by all divine beings as the primordial Brahman. One who realizes knowledge as Brahman and remains unwavering in that realization attains fulfillment and transcends bodily limitations. This self, composed of knowledge (Vijñānamaya), is the embodied soul of the previous layer. Yet beyond it lies a subtler essence, the self-formed of bliss (Ānandamaya). This blissful self-permeates and sustains the intellectual sheath. It too reflects the human form: Love (Priya) is its head, Joy (Moda) its right wing, Delight (Pramoda) it left, Bliss (Ānanda) its core, and Brahman its tail-the ultimate support.^[11]

2.1.5.1. Summary

Drawing upon the Pancha Kosha framework described in the Thaittiriya Upanishad, human existence is seen as a continuum of five interwoven sheaths from the physical body to the innermost core of bliss. Each layer progressively reveals deeper aspects of the self: the Annamaya (body) experiences physiological symptoms of anger, the Pranamaya channels its energy, the Manomaya harbors its emotional and reactive qualities, the Vijnanamaya interprets and regulates it through discernment, and the Anandamaya offers the possibility of transcendence beyond its grip. Thus, anger is neither merely a behavioral impulse nor an ethical failing, but a multilayered phenomenon that can be understood and potentially transformed through a holistic lens of embodied consciousness.

2.1.6. Brihadaranyaka uanishad

In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, anger is not glorified as a divine attribute but rather exposed as an obstacle to self-realization. The Upaniṣadic seeker is called to transcend such mental disturbances to attain ātma-jñāna (self-knowledge). Anger, like desire and pride, binds the mind to sensory distractions and perpetuates ego-driven dualities. In section 4.4, as the jīva prepares for liberation, it systematically sheds worldly traits, including krodha, to merge with the unchanging Brahman. The text presents a philosophical pivot from Rīgvedic perspectives, portraying krodha as inner unrest that must be relinquished for one to dwell in the silence of the Self. It suggests that liberation (mokṣa) arises not through conquest but through deep renunciation and ethical clarity.

katame rudrā iti| daśame puruṣe prāṇā ātmaikādaśaste| yadā asmāt śarīrāt martyāt ut krāmanti atha rudanti| tadyad rudanti tasmāt rudrāḥ iti| (Chapter 3, Brahmana 9, Verse 4; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)^[13]

The Rudras are identified as the ten faculties of action and perception within the human body, along with the mind as the eleventh. Upon departing from the physical form at death, these subtle forces evoke sorrow among loved ones. Because their exit causes weeping (rud), they are symbolically named Rudras.

trayāḥ prajāpatyāḥ prajāpatau pitari brahmacaryamūṣuḥ—devā manuṣyā asurāḥ; uṣitvā brahmacaryaṁ devā ūcuḥ, bravītu no bhavāniti; tebhyo haitadākṣaramuvāca da iti; vyajñāsiṣṭā3 iti; vyajñāsiṣṭeti hocuḥ, dāmyateti na āttheti; omīti hovāca, vyajñāsiṣṭeti || 1 || (Chapter 5, brahmana 2, verse 1; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)^[13]

Three groups of beings, the gods, humans, and asuras lived in disciplined study under their father, Prajāpati. When their period of learning ended, the gods approached him for guidance. In response, he uttered the syllable “Da” and asked if they had grasped its meaning. The gods replied, “We have understood you are instructing us to practice self-restraint.” Prajāpati affirmed, “Indeed, you have understood well.”

atha hainaṁ manuṣyā ūcuḥ, bravītu no bhavāniti; tebhyo haitadevākṣaramuvāca da iti; vyajñāsiṣṭā3 iti; vyajñāsiṣṭeti hocuḥ, datteti na āttheti; omīti hovāca, vyajñāsiṣṭeti || 3 || (Chapter 5, brahmana 2, verse 2; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)^[14]

Then, the humans approached Prajāpati and requested instruction. He offered them the same syllable “Da” and asked if they had grasped its meaning. They responded, “Yes, you are urging us to practice generosity.” Prajāpati affirmed, “Indeed, you have understood rightly.”

atha hainamasurā ūcuḥ, bravītu no bhavāniti; tebhyo haitadevākṣaramuvāca da iti; vyajñāsiṣṭā3 iti; vyajñāsiṣṭeti hocuḥ, dayadhvamiti na āttheti; omīti hovāca, vyajñāsiṣṭeti; tadedevaiṣā daivī vāganuvadati stanayitnur da da da iti dāmyata datta dayadhvamiti; tadedatrayaṁ śikṣet damaṁ dānaṁ dayāmiti || 3 || (Chapter 5, brahmana 2, verse 3; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)^[14]

The Asuras approached Prajāpati and requested guidance. He uttered the syllable “Da” and asked if they understood. They replied, “Yes, we understand it to mean: show compassion.” Prajāpati affirmed their insight. That same teaching echoes even now in the voice of thunder, repeating “Da, Da, Da” a celestial reminder to practice self-restraint, generosity, and compassion. Thus, these three discipline, giving, and kindness are to be cultivated.

trayāḥ prajāpatyāḥ prajāpatau pitari brahmacaryamūṣuḥ devā manuṣyā asurāḥ; uṣitvā brahmacaryaṁ devā ūcuḥ, bravītu no bhavāniti; tebhyo haitadākṣaramuvāca da iti; vyajñāsiṣṭā3 iti; vyajñāsiṣṭeti hocuḥ, dāmyateti na āttheti; omīti hovāca, vyajñāsiṣṭeti || 1 || (Chapter 5, brahmana 2, verse 1; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)^[17]

Three groups the gods, humans, and asuras, lived in disciplined study under their father, Prajāpati. When the gods completed their period of learning, they approached him for guidance. In response, Prajāpati uttered the syllable “Da” and asked if they had understood its meaning. The gods replied, “Yes, we understand it as a call for self-restraint.” Prajāpati affirmed, “Indeed, you have understood well.”

atha hainaṁ manuṣyā ūcuḥ, bravītu no bhavāniti; tebhyo haitadevākṣaramuvāca da iti; vyajñāsiṣṭā3 iti; vyajñāsiṣṭeti hocuḥ, datteti na āttheti; omīti hovāca, vyajñāsiṣṭeti || 3 || (Chapter 5, brahmana 2, verse 2; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)^[14]

Next, the humans approached Prajāpati seeking instruction. He offered them the same syllable “Da” and asked if they had grasped its meaning. They responded, “Yes, we understand it as a call to give.” Prajāpati

affirmed their understanding, saying, “Indeed, you have understood rightly.”

atha hainamasurā ūcuḥ, bravītu no bhavāniti; tebhyo haitadevāksāramuvāca da iti; vyajñāsiṣṭā3 iti; vyajñāsiṣmeti hocuḥ, dayadhvamiti na āttheti; omīti hovāca, vyajñāsiṣṭeti; tadetadevaiṣā daivī vāganuvadati stanayitmur da da da iti dāmyata datta dayadhvamiti; tadetattrayaṃ śikṣet damaṃ dānaṃ dayāmiti || 3 || (Chapter 5, brahmana 2, verse 3; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)^[14]

The Asuras then approached Prajāpati and requested instruction. He uttered the same syllable “Da” and asked if they had understood. They replied, “Yes, we understand it as a call to show compassion.” Prajāpati affirmed their insight. That same teaching echoes even today in the voice of thunder, repeating “Da, Da, Da” a celestial reminder to practice restraint, generosity, and kindness. Thus, one should cultivate these three virtues: self-discipline, giving, and compassion.

2.1.6.1. Summary

In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, Prajāpati imparts a single syllable “Da” as ethical instruction to three groups: Devas, humans, and Asuras. Each interprets it according to their nature: Dāmyata (self-restraint) for the pleasure-seeking gods, Datta (charity) for the greedy humans, and Dayadhvam (compassion) for the cruel demons. This triadic teaching encapsulates the Upanishadic emphasis on inner discipline as the path to spiritual harmony, urging all beings to cultivate restraint, generosity, and empathy. The thundercloud’s echo “Da, Da, Da” symbolizes the divine reinforcement of these universal virtues mentioned in Table 1 below.

2.1.7. Sri rudram

Śrī Rudram, found in the Yajurveda’s Taittirīya Samhita (4.5–4.10), is one of the most sacred and powerful Vedic hymns dedicated to Lord Rudra, a fierce and transformative form of Shiva. Comprising two parts, Namakam and Chamakam, it invokes Rudra both as destroyer and healer, offering salutations while requesting divine blessings for material and spiritual well-being. The hymn embraces Rudra’s presence in all forms of existence, from the thunderous storm to the silent ascetic, and reflects the philosophy of unity amid apparent duality. Often chanted during Vedic rituals and purification ceremonies, Śrī Rudram is revered as a mantra that calms inner turbulence and aligns the seeker with cosmic order.

namastē rudra manyava utōta iṣavē nama: |

namastē astu dhanvanē bāhubhyāmuta tē nama: || (Anuvaka 1, verse 1; Sri Rudram)

Parameswara! your, to anger, prostration. Further, your, to the arrow, prostration. your, to the bow, may my prostration be. Further, your, to the two arms, prostration.^[15]

mānastoke tanaye māna āyūṣi māno goṣu māno aśveṣu rīriṣaḥ |

vīrānmāno rudra bhāmito vadhīrhaṣimanto namasā vidhema te || (Anuvaka 10, verse 6, Sri Rudram)

O Parameswara, you who are angry with us (for not having done things meant to be done), our, children, sons, do not trouble. Our, lifespan, do not trouble. Our, cows, and our horses, (Ma Ririshah). Our servants, do not trouble. With Havis like Charu, Purodasam etc., or things offered with devotion, to you, (we) prostrate, and serve.^[15]

*jaiṣṭhyā-ñca mā ādhipatyā-ñca me manyuścā me bhāmāścā me-
’māścā me-’mbhāścā me jemā cā me mahimā cā me varimā cā
me prathimā cā me varṣmā cā me drāghuyā cā me vṛddha-ñcā me*

*vṛddhiśca me satya-ñcā me śraddhā cā me jagacca me dhanā-ñca
me vaśāśca me tviṣiśca me krīdā cā me modāśca me jātā-ñcā me
janiṣyamāṇa-ñca me sūkta-ñcā me sukrta-ñcā me vitta-ñcā me
vedyā-ñca me bhūta-ñcā me bhaviṣyaccā me suga-ñcā me supathā-
ñca ma rddha-ñcā ma rddhiśca me klpta-ñcā me klptiśca me matīśca
me sumatīśca me || 2|| (Anuvaka 2, Matra 1, Sri Rudra Chamakam)*

The Second Anuvaka of the Chamakam invokes a rich tapestry of qualities essential for a balanced and meaningful life. It calls for excellence in leadership, inner radiance, and the capacity for expansion both in worldly stature and spiritual insight. The hymn emphasizes the cultivation of truthfulness, faith, and prosperity, not as isolated ideals but as interwoven forces that shape a life of integrity and abundance. This section of the Chamakam seeks a synergy between material achievement and ethical refinement. It celebrates the power of righteous anger when aligned with dharma, the grace of self-mastery, and the dignity of earned honor. The prayer is not merely for possessions, but for the virtues that make one worthy of them discernment, resilience, and the ability to uplift others.^[15]

2.1.7.1. Summary

Śrī Rudram is a sacred Vedic chant from the Taittirīya Samhita that reverently invokes Lord Rudra in his dual aspects as fierce guardian and benevolent healer. Through Namakam and Chamakam, the hymn navigates divine wrath and cosmic grace, seeking protection from Rudra’s anger while requesting blessings for vitality, peace, and abundance. Verses like Anuvaka 1 and 10 reflect deep humility before Rudra’s power, while Anuvaka 2 in Chamakam expands the prayer to include wishes for leadership, brilliance, wisdom, and spiritual evolution. Altogether, Śrī Rudram presents a holistic vision of human aspiration, one where even divine anger is purified into righteous action and inner harmony.

2.1.8. Bhagavad gita

In the Bhagavad Gita, there many famous shlokas wherein Lord Krishna talks to Arjuna about anger and how it can lead to self-destruction.

dhyāyato viṣayānpuṃsa: saṅgasteṣūpajāyate |

saṅgātsaṅjāyate kāma: kāmātkrodho ’bhijāyate || 2.62 ||

When a person continually dwells on sensory objects, attachment toward them arises. From attachment springs desire, and when desire is obstructed, it gives rise to anger.^[16]

krodhādbhavati sammoha: sammohātsmṛtivyabhrama:

smṛtibhramṣād buddhināśo buddhināśātpraṇaśyati || 2.63 ||

From anger emerges delusion; delusion clouds memory, leading to confusion. When memory falters, discernment is lost. And with the collapse of intelligence, a person descends from their rightful path.^[16]

dhūmenāvriyate vahniriyathādarśo malena ca |

yatholbenāvṛto garbhastathā tenedamāvṛtam ||3. 38 ||

Just as smoke veils a flame, dust obscures a mirror, and the womb hides the unborn child, so too, desire clouds the clarity of one’s inner wisdom.^[17]

tasmāttvamindriyāṇyādaṇu niyamyā bharatarāṣabha |

pāpmānaṃ prajahi hyenaṃ jñānavijñānanāśanam || 3.41||

Therefore, O noble descendant of Bharata, begin by mastering the senses. Strike down this inner adversary desire which embodies wrongdoing and erodes both wisdom and spiritual insight.^[17]

icchā dveṣa: sukhaṃ du: khaṃ saṅghātaścetanā dhṛti: |

etatkṣetram samāseṇa savikāramudāhṛtam || 13.7||

Attraction and repulsion, joy and sorrow, the physical form, awareness, and determination, these elements together constitute the field of experience, along with its transformations.^[17]

ahaṅkāraṃ balaṃ darpaṃ kāmaṃ krodhaṃ parigrahaṃ |

vimucya nirmama: śānto brahmabhūyā kalpate || 18.53||

One who has relinquished ego, aggression, pride, craving, possessiveness, and selfishness, who abides in inner peace, is prepared for union with Brahman, the ultimate reality.^[17]

2.1.8.1. Summary

In today's fast-paced world, the Bhagavad Gita's insights on anger and desire feel strikingly relevant. When constant exposure to material desires fuels attachment, unfulfilled longing easily breeds frustration and rage. This emotional turbulence clouds judgment, disrupts inner balance, and undermines clarity – mirroring mental burnout, impulsive decision-making, and loss of purpose common in modern lifestyles. Krishna's guidance to control the senses and cultivate detachment highlights a timeless path toward peace: liberation lies not in indulging every impulse, but in mastering them to protect our wisdom, well-being, and dharmic integrity.

2.1.9. Patanjali yogasutra

The foundational text of classical Yoga philosophy; the Yoga Sūtras of Sage Patanjali, mental modifications, or vṛttis, are central to understanding psychological fluctuations. Among these, anger is identified as a potent vṛtti, reflecting its capacity to disturb mental equilibrium. Drawing from Paramahansa Prajnananda's 1996 commentary, anger is interpreted not as a standalone emotion but as a dynamic manifestation of vṛtti-activity. Patanjali characterizes vṛttis as inherently volatile, persistent, unpredictable, and capable of existing in both gross and subtle forms. These mental tendencies behave like dormant seeds that activate under favorable conditions. Anger, therefore, resides latently within the mind and surfaces in response to specific stimuli. This conceptualization aligns with Patanjali's broader goal of attaining chitta-vṛtti-nirodha; the cessation of mental fluctuations, highlighting the yogic imperative to regulate anger through disciplined practice and meditative restraint.

vṛttayaḥ pañcatayyaḥ klišṭā aklišṭāḥ ||1.5||

The fluctuations of the mind known as vṛttis can be classified into five types, some leading to suffering and others not. Their nature depends on the mind's relationship with sensory objects. When consciousness is entangled in bodily sensations and external stimuli, these mental waves tend to generate pain. But when the mind withdraws from sensory attachment, the vṛttis lose their power to disturb, and one experiences freedom from suffering.^[18]

maitrīkaruṇāmuditopekṣāṇāṃ sukhaduḥkhaṇyāpūṇyaviśayāṇāṃ bhāvanātaḥ cittaprasādanam ||1:33||

The mind attains serenity when one cultivates the right attitude toward different types of individuals: friendliness toward those who are joyful, compassion for those in distress, appreciation for the virtuous, and equanimity toward those who act harmfully. These four dispositions, when practiced sincerely help preserve inner peace and emotional balance.^[18]

avidyāsmītārāgadveṣābhīniveśāḥ kleśāḥ ||2.3||

Lack of wisdom(ignorance), egoism, likes, dislikes, and love for life are the great causes of miseries in life

There are five types of afflictions in life, ignorance, ego, likes, dislikes, and clinging to life. (Shri Lahiri Mahasaya)^[18]

kleśamūlaḥ karmāśayo dṛṣṭādrṣṭājanmavedanīyaḥ ||2.12||

The reservoir of actions, which are noted in all afflictions, brings all types of experiences in present and future life.

The reservoir of actions, both good and bad of this life and other lives, is the root of the miseries of anger, passion, desire, etc. (Shri Lahiri Mahasaya)^[18]

vītarkabādhane pratipakṣabhāvanam ||2:33||

It is essential to practice opposite thoughts in order to eliminate negative and evil thoughts in relation to practicing Yama and Niyama.^[18]

vītarkā hīṃsādayaḥ kṛtakāritānumoditā lobhakrodhamohapūrvakā mṛdumadhyādhimātrā duḥkḥājñānānantaphalā itī pratipakṣabhāvanam ||2:34||

These are improper thoughts or emotions, such as thoughts of hurting others, instigating violence, etc. They are done by oneself, done by others, or approved because of greed, anger, and delusion. Whether they are slight, medium, or intense, they result in endless pain and ignorance, so there is a need for pondering over the opposites.^[18]

2.1.9.1. Summary

In the Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali, anger is depicted as a powerful mental disturbance (vṛtti) that disrupts inner tranquility. Rooted in the kleśas, particularly aversion (dveṣa) and ignorance (avidyā), anger are seen as a seed-like modification that manifests when triggered by external stimuli. Sutra 1.5 classifies such vṛttis as either painful or non-painful, depending on their attachment to sensory experience. Through cultivating virtues like compassion and equanimity (1.33), and practicing counter-thoughts (pratipakṣa-bhāvanam, 2.33–2.34), one can transform anger into clarity. Ultimately, yoga offers a disciplined path to transcend anger, not by suppression, but by uprooting its karmic and psychological roots.

2.2. Cultural Contexts and Contemporary Society

Anger in contemporary society is no longer confined to private emotional experience, it has become a public, performative, and politicized force. Its manifestations span political mobilization, workplace dynamics, public health discourse, and digital ecosystems, each reflecting unique cultural inflections and structural tensions.

2.2.1. Anger as a political tool

In democratic societies, anger has emerged as a mobilizing emotion, often harnessed to galvanize support, express dissent, and challenge institutional power. Scholars such as Marcus *et al.*^[19] argue that anger, unlike fear, prompts action rather than withdrawal, making it a potent driver of political engagement. This is evident in movements like Black Lives Matter, where moral outrage over systemic injustice catalyzed global protests and policy debates.

- Empirical studies show that anger increases voter turnout and political participation, particularly among previously disengaged groups^[20]
- Populist leaders often exploit anger to frame elite institutions as corrupt, thereby legitimizing radical change.^[21]
- International relations scholars note that anger can escalate diplomatic tensions, as seen in China's military response to perceived provocations around Taiwan.^[22]

Anger thus functions as both a strategic resource and a risk factor, capable of fostering solidarity or deepening polarization.

2.2.2. Anger as a public health concern

From a public health perspective, anger is increasingly recognized as a psychosocial stressor with tangible health consequences. Chronic anger correlates with elevated risks of cardiovascular disease, substance abuse, and mental health disorders.^[23]

- A population-based study in Australia found that 18.5% of respondents felt angry about their health status, with links to chronic illness, psychological distress, and reduced social support^[24]
- Anger in the workplace contributes to absenteeism, burnout, and toxic environments, with aggression ranging from verbal hostility to passive sabotage^[25,26]
- Public health campaigns increasingly address anger as a hidden epidemic, advocating for emotional literacy and early intervention (Wrexham University, 2024).^[27]

This framing shifts anger from a moral failing to a social determinant of health, demanding interdisciplinary responses.

2.2.3. Digital expression and social media outrage

The digital age has transformed anger into a viral commodity. Social media platforms amplify outrage through algorithms that reward engagement, regardless of emotional valence.^[28,29]

- Rage-baiting, a tactic used to provoke anger for clicks, has become a monetized strategy among influencers and media outlets^[30,31]
- Anger is likely to motivate individuals to engage in behaviors aimed at confronting or correcting the source of the emotion” (Nabi, 2002, p. 206).^[32]
- Studies show that anger spreads faster than other emotions on platforms like Twitter, contributing to polarization and reduced empathy.^[33,34]

Digital anger thus reflects a new cultural grammar, where immediacy and virality reshape emotional norms and civic discourse.

3. SUMMARY

In contemporary society, anger transcends personal emotion to become a politicized, performative force shaping public life. It mobilizes political action, fosters civic engagement, and sometimes deepens societal polarization, as seen in protests and populist movements. In public health, anger is recognized as a chronic stressor linked to serious health issues and workplace dysfunction, demanding broader emotional literacy and intervention strategies. Meanwhile, digital platforms have redefined anger as viral currency amplified, commodified, and contagious, reshaping discourse through rage-driven algorithms and moral grandstanding. Altogether, these domains reveal anger not merely as a vice but as a mirror reflecting deep cultural tensions and systemic pressures.

4. DISCUSSION

Anger, across texts and times, resists simplistic classification; it is a spiritual force in the Rigveda, a moral compass in the Ramayana, a strategic fire in the Mahabharata, and a layered phenomenon within Upanishadic psychology. Far from being dismissed as a flaw, anger appears as a dharmic instrument for clarity and justice when rightly harnessed. In modern life, its transformation into political energy, health hazard, and algorithm-driven spectacle reveals a tension between its ancient call for regulation and its contemporary performance. This

thematic continuity suggests that anger, whether divine or digital, demands discernment, not suppression and holds potential as a catalyst for personal evolution and collective realignment.

5. CONCLUSION

Anger (Krodha) is both instinctive and deeply thoughtful. This study shows how different cultures have viewed anger: ancient Indian thinkers saw it as a barrier to inner peace, tied to ego and desire. Today, anger is more complex; it is linked to brain activity, used in politics, and easily spread online. Society sees it as harmful when personal, powerful when shared, and dramatic when digital. These changes call for fresh thinking in how we handle anger in health, ethics, and public life. Ultimately, this study advocates for a nuanced, integrative framework that neither repressed antiquity nor diagnosed the present. Anger, when examined across epochs, emerges as a marker of human interiority, an emotion deeply personal, yet inevitably public, demanding inquiry rather than condemnation. By harmonizing ancient insights with contemporary paradigms, we open a space where Krodha can be understood not merely as an emotion to be suppressed or indulged, but as an opportunity for ethical refinement, psychological clarity, and cultural dialogue.

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This study does not require ethical clearance as it is a review article.

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10. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript, and all data are available for only review purposes from principal investigators.

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Table 1: Anger reveals varied emotional triggers and dharmic interpretations across characters

Character	Trigger	Form of anger	Dharma lens
Parashurama	Injustice to Amba	Prolonged, righteous	Dharma challenged by personal ties
Krishna	Arjuna’s hesitation/ Bhishma’s might	Fierce yet moral	Dharma as divine compulsion
Drona	Bhishma’s fall, loyalty to Kauravas	Tactical, grief-laced	Brahmin’s fury against disruption
Karna	Death of son, lifelong scorn	Personal, prideful	Heroism scarred by fate
Sakuni	Gandhara’s humiliation	Calculated, hidden	Vengeance as strategic dharma inversion
Dhritarashtra	Death of his sons	Repressed, delusional	Guilt-laced catharsis in shadow form