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**See also:** ABLUTION; ĀDAM, UPON HIM PEACE; ʿĀLAQA; ʿARAFĀT; BADR; BELIEF; BELIEVER(S); COMMUNITY; DIVINE DECREE; FRIDAY; GREETINGS; HĀRŪT AND MĀRŪT; HELL; HIDDEN AND MANIFEST; ḤUNAYN; INTERCESSION; ISRAELITE ACCOUNTS; JĀHILIYYA; LIFE OF THIS WORLD; NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION; PARADISE; PERSEVERENCE, PATIENCE, AND FORITTUDE; PROSTRATION; RITUAL PURITY AND IMPURITY; SĀBIʿUN; SATAN; THRONE.

## ANGER

### GHAḌAB, GHAYZ, SAKHAṬ

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions and Usage; ii. Human Anger; iii. Divine Wrath; iv. Bibliography.

### Definitions and Usage

*Ghaḍab*, *ghayz*, and *sakhaṭ*, three words used in the Qurʾān to denote anger. Derivatives of the root *gh-d-b* occur twenty-four times in the Qurʾān, while those of *s-kh-ṭ* occur four times. Six of these combined occurrences refer to human anger, while the remaining derivatives denote Allah's anger.

Allah's wrath is never described in the Qurʾān as *ghayz*. All of the eleven occurrences of this word or its derivatives refer to the anger of humans or objects (as in the well-nigh bursting fury of the fire of hell mentioned in Q 25:12 and Q 67:8). The wrath of Allah is always praiseworthy and just, whereas human anger clouds the mind and interferes with one's judgment, and must therefore be restrained (Ghazālī, *Ihyāʾ* 3:191).

- I. *Ghaḍab* ("anger") is derived from the root letters *gh-d-b*, signifying intensity and strength, and indicates the intensification of displeasure (Ibn Fāris). A person who is *ghaḍīb*, *ghaḍīb*, or *ghaḍībān* is one easily moved to anger or whose anger is intense (Ibn Manẓūr). Al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī (d. ca.502/1108) defines anger as excitement (*thawarān*) of the blood (*q.v.*) in the heart (*q.v.*) out of desire for vengeance (*Mufradāt*).
- II. *Ghayz* ("rage") is derived from the letters *gh-y-z*, which denote the anguish one causes another (Ibn Fāris). Al-Jawharī (d. 393/1003) defines *ghayz* as the concealed anger of someone who cannot express it openly (*Ṣiḥāḥ*). Al-Rāghib specifies that *ghayz* is the most intense form of *ghaḍab*, being the passion one feels when angry, and *taghayyuz* as meaning to express one's rage (*Mufradāt*).
- III. *Sakhaṭ/sukht* is the opposite of *riḍā* (see CONTENTMENT), and means to dislike something and be displeased with it. However, its intransitive form is synonymous with *ghaḍab* (Ibn Manẓūr; al-ʿAskarī, *al-Furūq al-lughawiyya*, p. 130). Al-Rāghib defines *sakhaṭ* as vehement anger that warrants punishment (in the eyes of the angered), but when used of the Almighty means to bring down His punishment (*wa huwa min Allāh taʿālā inzāl al-ʿuqūba*) (*Mufradāt*).

In differentiating between these terms, al-Thaʿālibī

(350-429/961-1038) considers *ghaḍab* to be a general term signifying anger, while *sukhṭ* and *ghayz* indicate its various states: the former is its first degree, mere displeasure, and the latter is anger that is latent because one cannot avenge oneself (*Fiqh al-luḡha*, p. 189). Al-ʿAskarī (d. ca.395/1005) further distinguishes *ghaḍab* from *ghayz* in that the first is a vengeful desire that harm befall another while the second is closer to sorrow (*al-Furūq al-luḡhawīyya*, p. 130) wherein one despairs of gaining revenge (Zabīdī, *sub gh-d-b*).

### Human Anger

Anger is considered to be an emotional response to which all human beings are susceptible, and is not always considered a reprehensible passion. Al-Ghazālī (450-505/1058-1111) states that anger is a latent force in human beings which, when stimulated, leads to the excitement of the heart's blood and its spreading through the veins and upper extremities of the body, turning the face and eyes red (*Ihyāʾ* 3:189). This conforms with the hadith which states: "Anger is an ember in the heart of the son of Ādam: do you not see the redness of his eyes and the swelling of his jugular veins?" (Tirmidhī, *Fitān*, mā akhbara al-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ʿalayh wa-sallam aṣḥābah bi-mā huwa kāʾim ilā yawm al-qiyāma). Al-Ghazālī also notes that so long as humans have preferences and find some things more agreeable than others, disliking their opposites, they will continue to experience anger and rage if confronted with scarcity—for these feelings naturally occur when one is robbed of what one values or is faced with what one disfavors. Therefore, anger cannot be absolutely uprooted, nor should it be left unchecked either. Rather, like other passions that need to be controlled and directed (see AVARICE AND GREED; ENVY; HAPPINESS AND SADNESS; LOVE, LUST, AND DESIRE), it should be appropriately groomed to moderation (*Ihyāʾ* 3:191-192).

The Qurʾān does not forbid such feelings altogether, but gives general directives as to how a true believer should respond to them. Q 42:37, for example, describes the believers as those who, *when they are angry (ghadibū), forgive*. The God-fearing (*muttaqūn*; see FEAR; RIGHTEOUSNESS AND VIRTUE), who are promised gardens as expansive as the heavens and the earth, are described in the Qurʾān as those *who repress their anger (al-kāzīmīn al-ghayz)* and *pardon people* (Q 3:134). Al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122) explains the expression *kazm al-ghayz* as follows: "*Kazm* means to contain something when it overflows, and *kazm al-ghayz* means being filled with rage but holding it back without revealing it" (*Tafsīr*). Thus the God-fearing restrain their rage and do not avenge themselves even when able to

do so. Rather, they are patient and forbearing, holding no malice towards aggressors (Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*; Ālūsī). Further indicating the reward awaiting such persons, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "He who represses his anger despite being able to exercise it will be called by Allah the Exalted before all of creation on the Day of Judgment, to choose of the Houris (*q.v.*) whomever he desires" (Tirmidhī, *Birr wal-ṣīla*, bāb fi kazm al-ghayz). Ibn ʿĀshūr (1296-1393/1879-1972) states that to succeed in suppressing overwhelming rage demonstrates the strength of one's will and ability to subdue one's desires, making it among the best of human virtues (*sub* Q 3:134)—as mentioned in the well-known hadith: "The strong man is not one who overpowers people by brute force; the strong man is he who controls himself when angry" (Bukhārī, *Adab*, al-ḥadhar min al-ghaḍab).

The Prophet, peace be upon him, taught the Divine instruction to repress one's anger in various ways. For instance, he directed believers (i) to mitigate its effects by remaining silent (Aḥmad, *Musnad* ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbbās 4:39 §2136); (ii) to combat it by saying: "I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan (*q.v.*)" (*aʿūdhu bi-llāh min al-shayṭān al-rajīm*) (Bukhārī, *Adab*, al-ḥadhar min al-ghaḍab); (iii) to douse it by performing ablution (*wuḍūʾ*) (*q.v.*), as in the hadith: "Anger is from Satan, Satan was created from fire, and verily fire is extinguished with water. So if any of you get angry, you should perform ablution" (Abū Dāwūd, *Adab*, mā yuqāl ʿinda al-ghaḍab); or (iv) to divert it by changing position, as in the hadith: "If any of you is angered while standing then he should sit, and if his anger does not subside he should lie down" (Abū Dāwūd, *Adab*, mā yuqāl ʿinda al-ghaḍab). These verses and narrations complement the hadith according to which the Prophet, peace be upon him, repeated thrice to a man seeking advice (*q.v.*): "Do not become angry [at all]" (Bukhārī, *Adab*, al-ḥadhar min al-ghaḍab). While anger is a passion natural to humans, Ibn Rajab (736-795/1335-1393) observes that this hadith can be understood as an injunction to work to develop those qualities of character that would keep him from getting angry even when provoked—or, alternately, to demand that a person control whatever rage he may experience, so that he does not act on his anger (*Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm wal-ḥikam*, p. 178). Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449) adds that this advice may possibly have been intended specifically for that particular individual, who was perhaps irascible by nature (*Fath al-bārī*, *Adab*, al-ḥadhar min al-ghaḍab).

Although Muslims are urged to subdue their fury in all circumstances, one may yet seek equitable retaliation: *and if you punish, then punish with the like of that with*