Is Anger solely destructive? Can it ever be constructive? Is anger ever called for?

1.Kohelet 11:10

וְהַטֵּר כַּעַס מִלְבֶּךְ וְהַעֲבֵר רָעָה מִבְּשַׂרֶךְ כִּי־הַיַּלְדוּת וְהַשַּׁחֲרוּת הָבֶל: Banish anger from your heart and evil from your flesh, because youth and youthfulness (literally:black hair) are fleeting.

2. Rashi on Kohelet 11:10

"Therefore banish anger". [Banish] anything that causes anger to the Omnipresent.

והסר בעס. דברים המכעיסים את המקום

3. Bavli Shabbat 105b

MISHNA: One who tears [their garment] in his anger or over his dead relative is exempt. And anyone else who performs labors destructively on Shabbat is exempt. And one who performs a labor destructively in order to repair [is liable for violating Shabbat], and the measure is as one who [does that melakha] constructively...GEMARA: One who rends in anger or in mourning over their dead relative is liable. And even though they desecrate Shabbat [by tearing his garmen]t, they nevertheless fulfilled [tearing their garment in mourning]. This is not difficult, as this mishna, (which states one is liable for rending their garment), is referring to one's own dead relative (for whom one is obligated to tear one's garment). And that (which states one is exempt), refers to any other deceased.

שבת ק״ה ב מתני׳ הקורע בחמתו ועל מתו וכל המקלקלין פטורין והמקלקל על מנת לתקן שיעורו כמתקן שיעור..: גמ׳ ורמינהו הקורע בחמתו ובאבלו ועל מתו חייב ואף על פי שמחלל את השבת יצא ידי קריעה לא קשיא הא במת דידיה הא במת

. . . .

Say that you heard [that Rabbi Yehuda rules that one is liable for performing a labor not needed for its own sake in the case of a constructive act; did you hear him deem one liable in the case of a destructive act? Rabbi Avin said: This case, [where one rends their garment in anger], is also constructive, because one assuages their anger. (Rending his garment calms him; therefore, it can be said that he derives benefit from the act of rending, and it is consequently a constructive act). And is it then permitted in that manner? Wasn't it taught: Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says in the name of Hilfa bar Agra, who said in the name of Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri: One who rends their garments out of anger, or who breaks their vessels out of anger, or who scatters their money out of anger, should be like an idol worshipper in your eyes, as that is the craft of the evil inclination. Today it tells him do this, and tomorrow it tells him do that, until [eventually, when he no longer controls himself], it tells him worship idols and he goes and worships idols. Rabbi Avin said: What verse alludes to this? "There shall not be a strange god within you, and you shall not bow to a foreign god" (Psalms 81:10). What is the strange god that is within a person's body? Say that it is the evil inclination.

אימר דשמעת ליה לרבי יהודה במתקן במקלקל מי שמעת ליה אמר רבי אבין האי נמי מתקן הוא דקעביד נחת רוח ליצרו וכהאי גוונא מי שרי והתניא רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר משום חילפא בר אגרא שאמר משום רבי יוחנו בו נורי המקרע בגדיו <u>בחמתו והמשבר כליו בחמתו</u> והמפזר מעותיו בחמתו יהא בעיניד כעובד עבודה זרה שכד אומנתו של יצר הרע היום אומר לו עשה כד ולמחר אומר לו עשה כד עד שאומר לו עבוד עבודה זרה <u>והולך ועובד</u> אמר רבי אבין מאי קראה לא יהיה בך אל זר ולא תשתחוה לאל נכר איזהו אל זר <u>שיש בגופו של אדם הוי אומר זה</u> יצר הרע

3. Mishneh Torah, Sabbath 12:1

(1) One who burns a minimal amount is liable; and that is when he needs the ashes (as it is a constructive act). But if he burns [something] in a destructive way, he is exempt – as he is destroying. One who burns the hedge of his fellow or his home is liable, even though he wrecks it. For his intention was to take vengeance against his enemy, and his mind was surely put at ease and his anger was assuaged. So it was like the one who tears for his dead [relative] or in his anger who is liable; and like one who wounds his fellow during his dispute. As all of these are improving [something] with regards to their evil impulse...

משנה תורה, הלכות שבת י"ב:א'

(א) הַפַּבְעִיר כָּל שֶׁהוּא חַיָב. וְהוּא שֶּיְהֵא צָרִידְ לָאֵפֶר. אֲבָל אִם הִבְעִיר דֶּרֶדְ הַשְּׁחָתָה פָּטוּר מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא מְקַלְקֵל. וְהַפֵּבְעִיר גְּדִישׁוֹ שֶׁל חֲבֵרוֹ אוֹ הַשּׂוֹרֵף דִּירָתוֹ חַיָּב אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁהוּא מִשְּׁוֹרְאוֹ וַהֲבִי נִתְקַרְה דַּעְתוֹ וְשָׁכְכָה מָשִׁוֹרְאוֹ וַהֲבִי נִתְקַרְרָה דַּעְתוֹ וְשַׁכְכָה הַמָּתוֹ שֶׁהוּא חַיָּב וּבְחוֹבֵל בַּחֲבֵרוֹ בַּשְׁעַת מִרִיבַּה שַׁכַּל אֵלוּ מִתַּקִּנִים הָן בָּשָׁעַת מִרִיבָּה שַׁכַּל אֵלוּ מִתַּקִּנִים הָן

אֵצֵל יִצְרָן הָרַע.

4.Shelah, Torah Shebikhtav, Vayakhel, Pekudei, Derekh Chayim 1-3 2."You shall not burn a fire in your settlements on Shabbat" The word "fire" here is an allusion to the destructive fire engendered by strife and anger. One needs to be careful not to allow oneself to become angry so that the fire of that hatred should not consume one, and all the more so on the holy day of Shabbat, so that the fire of *gehenom* will not burn within them. And one who gets angry on Shabbat, or who sows strife/discord Heaven forbid, causes the wrath of *gehenom* to burn within them, may it be far from us.

שני לוחות הברית, תורה שבכתב,
ויקהל, פקודי, דרך חיים א'-ג'
(ב) לא תבערו אש בכל
מושבותיכם ביום השבת (שמות
לה, ג). רומז לאש המחלוקת ואש
הכעס שצריך האדם ליזהר שלא
לבער אותו עולמית, ומכל שכן
ביום השבת קודש שאין בוער בו
אש של גיהנם. והכועס בשבת או
עושה מחלוקת חייו גורם להיות
חמת הגיהנם בוער בו בר מינן:

5. Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:10 - Ba'al Tashchit "Derekh Haschatah"

This prohibition does not apply to trees alone. Rather, anyone who breaks utensils, tears garments, destroys buildings, stops up a spring, or ruins food with a destructive intent transgresses the command 'Do not destroy.' However, he is not lashed. Instead, he receives stripes for rebellious conducts instituted by the Sages.

ְלְאׁ הָאִילֶנוֹת בִּלְבַד. אֶלֶּא כָּל הַמְשַׁבֵּר כֵּלִים. וְקוֹרֵע בְּגָדִים. וְהוֹרֵס בִּנְיָן. וְסוֹתֵם מַעְיָן. וּמְאַבֵּד מַאֲכָלוֹת דֶּרֶדְ הַשְּׁחָתָה. עוֹבֵר בְּלֹא תַשְּׁחִית. וְאֵינוֹ לוֹקָה אֶלֶא מַכַּת מַרְדּוּת מדּבריהם:

6. Mishneh Torah, Human Dispositions 2:2

How are they to be healed? We tell the wrathful person to train themselves to feel no reaction even if he is beaten or cursed. He should follow this course of behavior for a long time, until the anger is uprooted from his heart.

. . . .

One should take a similar course with each of the other traits. A person who swayed in the direction of one of the extremes should move in the direction of the opposite extreme, and accustom himself to that for a long time, until he has returned to the proper path, which is the midpoint for each and every temperament.

ְוְבֵיצֵד הִיא רְפּוּאָתָם. מִי שֶׁהוּא בַּעַל חֵמָה אוֹמְרִים לוֹ לְהַנְהִיג עַצְמוֹ שֶׁאִם הֻכָּה וְקֻלֵּל לֹא יַרְגִּישׁ כְּלָל. וְיֵלֵךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ זוֹ זְמַן מְרָבֶּה עַד שָׁיִּתְעַקֵּר הַחֵמָה מִלְבּוֹ

וְעַל קַו זֶה יַעֲשֶׂה בִּשְּאָר כָּל הַדֵּעוֹת אִם הָיָה רָחוֹק לַקָּצֶה הָאֶחָד יַרְחִיק עַצְמוֹ לַקַּצֵה הַשֵּׁנִי וִיִנָהֹג בּוֹ זִמֵן רֵב עַד שַׁיַּחֵזֹר בּוֹ

לַדֶּרֶךְ הַטּוֹבָה וְהִיא מִדָּה בֵּינוֹנִית שֶׁבְּכָל דֵּעָה וְדֵעָה

7. Mishneh Torah, Human Dispositions 2:3

And, yet, there are certain tendencies which person is forbidden to follow in the middle-way, but must distance himself from extreme to extreme..... So is anger an extremely evil tendency and it is proper for person to remove himself from it to the other extreme. One should <u>teach himself not to get angry, even over a matter which</u> <u>befits anger.</u> If one desires to engender awe in their children and household, or in the public, if he be at the head of a community, even if they desire to get angry at them so as to bring them back to the good way, they should only act angry in their presence so as to reprove them, but their disposition must remain calm within, even as a person imitates, who is angry when the time calls forth anger but in reality is not angry. The sages of yore said: "He who yields to anger is as if he worshiped idolatry". (Nedarim 22b). They also said: "Whosoever <u>vields to anger</u>, if he be a wise man his wisdom leaves him, and if he be a prophet his prophecy leaves him."(Pesahim, 66b). Truly the life of irritable persons is

משנה תורה, הלכות דעות ב':ג'

וְיֵשׁ דֵעוֹת שֵׁאָסוּר לוֹ לַאָדָם לִנְהֹג בָּהֵן בִּבֵינוֹנִית אַלָא יִתַרַחֶסְ מָן הַקָּצָה הָאֵחָד עַד הַקַּצָה הָאַחֵר. וְהוֹא גֹבָה לֶב. שָּאֵין דֶרֶךְ הַטּוֹבַה שִׁיִּהְיֵה אַדַם עַנַו בַּלְבַד אָלַא שִׁיִהְיֵה שְׁפַל רוּח וְתָהְיֵה רוּחוֹ נְמוּכַה למאד. ולפיכַד נאמר במשה רבנו (במדבר יב ג) ייעָנַו מְאֹדִיי וְלֹא נֵצֶאֱמֵר עָנָוֹ בִּלְבַד. וּלְפִיכָךְ צִוּוּ חַבָּמִים מִאד מָאד הָוֵי שִׁפַּל רוּחַ. וְעוֹד אָמִרוּ שֵּבָּל הַמַּגְבִּיהַ לִבּוֹ כָּפַר בָּעִקָּר שֶׁנֶאֱמַר (דברים ח יד) "וַרַם לַבַבֶּדְ וְשַׁכַחִתַּ אֶת הִי אֱלֹקֵידְיי. וְעוֹד אַמְרוֹ בְּשַׁמַתָּא ַמַאן דָאָית בֵּיה גַּסוּת הַרוּחַ וַאַפָּלוּ מִקַצַתַה. וְכֵן הַכַּעַס מִדָּה רַעַה הִיא עַד לִמְאֹד וְרַאוּי לַאַדַם שֶׁיִתְרַחֵק מִמֶּנָּה עַד הַקָּצָה הָאַחֵר. וִילַמֵּד עַצְמוֹ שֵׁלֹא יכעס וַאֵפְלוּ עַל דָבָר שֵׁרָאוּי לִכעס עַלָיו. ואָם רָצָה לַהַּטִּיל אֵימָה עַל בָּנַיו וּבְנֵי בֵּיתוֹ אוֹ עַל הַצִּבּוֹר אָם הַיָה פַּרְנַס וְרַצַה לְכָעס עַלֵיהֶן כָּדֵי שִׁיַחִזְרוּ לַמּוּטֵב יַרְאָה עַצְמוֹ בַּפְנֵיהֶם שָהוֹא כּוֹעֶס כָּדֵי לְיַסְרַם ותהיה דעתו מישבת בינו לבין עצמו כאדם שהוא מְדַמֶּה כּוֹעֶס בְּשָׁעַת כַּעֲסוֹ וְהוֹא אֵינוֹ כּוֹעֶס. אַמְרוֹ חַבָּמִים הָרָאשׁוֹנִים כָּל הַכּוֹעֵס כִּאְלוּ עוֹבֶד עַבוֹדַת כּוּכַבִים. וְאַמָּרוּ שֶׁכֵּל הַכּוֹעֵס אָם חַכֶּם הוֹא חַכְמַתוֹ

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no life. Pesahim, 113a.). They have, therefore, commanded to be far from anger, so that one will train himself not to mind even the things which do cause irritation, for such is the good way. The conduct of the just is to take insults but not give insults, hear themselves flouted but make no reply, do their duty as a work of love, and bear affliction cheerfully.

מְסְתַּלֶּקֶת מָמֶּנוּ וְאִם נָבִיא הוּא נְבוּאָתוֹ מִסְתַּלֶּקֶת מִמֶּנוּ. וּבַעֲלֵי כַּעַס אֵין חַיֵּיהֶם חַיִּים. לְפִיכָךְ צִּוּוּ לְהִתְרַחֵק מִן הַכַּעַס עַד שָׁיַּנְהִיג עַצְמוֹ שֶׁלֹא יַרְגִּישׁ אֲפָלּוּ לַדְּבָרִים הַמֵּכְעִיסִים וְזוֹ הִיא הַדֶּרֶךְ הַטּוֹבָה. וְדֶרֶךְ הַצַּדִּיקִים הַן עֲלוּבִין וְאֵינָן עוֹלְבִין שׁוֹמְעִים הֶרְפָּתָם וְאֵינָם מְשִׁיבִין עוֹשִׁין מֵאַהֲבָּה וּשְׂמֵחִים בְּיִסוּרִים.:

8. Sefer Hasidim 649, 651

649: There was an incident where they asked a pious man: "How did you merit longevity?" And he replied: "Never did I return insult to a person who cursed or embarrassed me, instead I would be patient with him and forgive anyone who would cause me distress"

651: And one does not have permission to be angry, and let him not do anything until he asks advice from that person whose way is not to be angered, except when it is commanded to be angry, but for those who cause others to sin, as it is written (*Jeremiah* 18:23) in the time of your wrath, do to them those who prevent the many from doing good as long as they are alive.

מעשה בחסיד אחד שאמרו לו במה הארכת ימים אמר לפי שמעולם לא קללני אדם או חרפני שעניתיו אלא הייתי סובלו ומוחל לכל שציערני

ואל יתן לו רשות לכעוס ושלא יעשה דבר עד שישאל עצה מאותו אדם שאין דרכו לכעוס על חנם אלא כשמצוה לכעוס אבל על המחטיאים כתיב (ירמיהו יח כג) בעת אפך עשה בהם באותם שמונעים את הרבים מלעשות טובה כל זמן שהם בחיים

9. Rav Shlomo Gansfried, Kitzur Shulhan Arukh 29:4 (19c.)

Anger is also a very evil trait, and it should be avoided at all costs. You should train yourself not to become angry even if you have good reason to be angry. And when it is necessary to impress your authority on your children and your household, you may pretend to be angry in order to admonish them, while retaining your composure inwardly. [The Talmud relates] "Eliyahu said to Rabbi Yehudah, the brother of Rav Salla, the Pious: "Do not become angry, and you will not sin," (do not become angry, because anger will induce you to sin), "Do not become intoxicated, and you will not sin." Our Rabbis of blessed memory said furthermore, "If anyone becomes angry it is considered as though he worships idols, and the torments of *Gehinnom* will be inflicted on him as it is written, "Therefore, remove anger from your heart and put away evil from your body." The word "evil" connotes Gehinnom as it is written: "Indeed, even the wicked for the day of evil." The life of angry men is no life. Therefore, [our Sages] ordained that a man should distance himself from anger to the point that he can conduct himself with utter disregard even for things that evoke [justifiable] anger. This is the proper path [to follow] and it is the way of the righteous, [as stated in the Talmud] "They suffer insults but do not insult, they listen to abuse heaped on them but do not answer, they are motivated by love in whatever they do, and they rejoice [even when] suffering pain." Concerning them, the Biblical verse says: "But those who love Him are as the sun when it comes out in its might."

וְכֵן הַכַּעַס הִיא מדַה רַעַה מאד וְרַאוי לאדם להתרחק ממנה מאד. ונרגיל את עצמו שלא יכעס אפלו על דבר שראוי לכעס. ואם צריד להטיל אימה על בַניו ובני ביתו יַראה עצמו בפניהם שהוא כועס כָּדֵי לִיַסְרַם, ותהא דַעתו מישבת בינו לבין עצמו. אמר ליה אַלַיַהוּ לַרַב יְהוּדַה אַחוּה דְרַב סַלַא חַסִידַא, לא תַרְתַּח וְלֹא תַחְטֵי (לֹא תַּכְעַס, שֵּמִתוֹדְ הַכַּעַס אַתַּה בַּא לִידֵי חטא) לא תרוי (לא תשתכר בייון) ולא תַחְטֵי. עוד אַמָרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכַרוּנַם לְבָרַכַה כַּל הַכּוֹעָס כָּאָלוּ עוֹבֶד עֲבוֹדַת אלילים, וכל מיני גיהנם שולטין בו, שנאמר והסר כעס מלבד, והעבר רעה ָמִבְּשָּׁרֶדְ וְאֵין רָעָה אֶלָּא גַּהִינָּם, שַׁנֵּאֵמַר וגם רשע ליום רעה. בעלי כעס אין ַחַצֵּיהֶם חַיִּים, לְפִּיכַדְ צִוּוּ לְהָתְרַחֶק מָן הַכַּעַס, עַד שִינָהִיג עַצְמוֹ שֵׁלֹא יַרְגִּישׁ אַפָּלוּ לִדְבַּרִים הַמַּכְעִיסִים. וְזוֹ הִיא דֵּרְדְ הטובה ודרד צדיקים, שהם עלובין ואינם עולבין, שומעין חרפתם ואינן משיבין, עושין מאַהבַה ושמחים בִּיִסוּרִים, עַלֵיהֶם הַכַּתוּב אומֵר ואוהביו כּצאת השמש בּגבורַתוּ.

10. R. A. J. Heschel, *The Prophets*, "Jeremiah" - Righteous anger? Anger or Moral Indignation
The modes of prophetic sympathy are determined by the modes of divine passion. The pathos of love
and the pathos of anger awake corresponding tones in the heart of the prophet. In his confessions
Jeremiah allows us to obtain a glimpse of the fervor of love as well as of the raging anger against the
people. Through insight into the nexus between prophetic emotion and divine pathos, it is possible to
gain a clue to the meaning behind the conflicting and confusing emotions of Jeremiah's mind. His
inconsolable grief over the destiny of the people is an expression of fellowship and love; the people's
anguish is his anguish. However, his emotions are not simply an instinctive attachment to his people or
a feeling of personal involvement in their fate. At times Jeremiah even wished to abandon his people...
Ardent as his love was for the people, he was primarily driven by what God felt for Israel. Accord with
the divine pathos determined his attractions and aversions. Love involves an appreciation of what is
precious in the beloved person. Israel was precious because it was the consort and the beloved of the
Lord.

....Impassioned with a sense of divine disturbance Jeremiah could condemn with a vehemence that was at times terrifying and devoid of charity. But his own heart was rich in tenderness and sensitivity to other people's suffering. He terrified in order to save. The disaster he threatened would be a disaster to him, sorrow and excruciating anguish. He had implored and warned them, he knew that if the people should remain dead to his words, he would drown in his own tears.

11. Bavli, Berakhot 7a

Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Yosei: From where is it derived that the Holy One, Blessed be, prays? As it is stated: "I will bring them to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in the house of My prayer" (Isaiah 56:7). The verse does not say the house of their prayer, but rather, "the house of My prayer"; from here we see that the Holy One, Blessed be, prays. What does God pray? To whom does God pray? Rav Zutra bar Tovia said that Rav said: God says: May it be My will that My mercy will overcome My anger towards Israel for their transgressions, and may My mercy prevail over My other attributes through which Israel is punished, and may I conduct myself toward My children, Israel, with the attribute of mercy, and may I enter before them beyond the letter of the law. Similarly, it was taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha, the High Priest, said: Once, on Yom Kippur, I entered the innermost sanctum, the Holy of Holies, to offer incense, and in a vision I saw Akatriel Ya, the Lord of Hosts, one of the names of God expressing His ultimate authority, seated upon a high and exalted throne (see Isaiah) 6). And He said to me: Yishmael, My son, bless Me. I said to Him the prayer that God prays: "May it be Your will that Your mercy overcome Your anger, and may Your mercy prevail over Your other attributes, and may You act toward Your children with the attribute of mercy, and may You enter before them beyond the letter of the law." The Holy One. Blessed be He, nodded His head and accepted the blessing.

ברכות ז' א

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי יוסי מנין שהקדוש ברוך הוא מתפלל שנאמר והביאותים אל הר קדשי ושמחתים בבית תפלתי תפלתם לא נאמר אלא תפלתי מכאן שהקדוש ברוך הוא מתפלל מאי מצלי אמר רב זוטרא בר טוביה אמר רב יהי רצון מלפני שיכבשו רחמי את כעסי ויגולו רחמי על מדותי ואתנהג עם בני במדת רחמים ואכנס להם לפנים משורת הדין תניא אמר רבי ישמעאל בן אלישע פעם אחת נכנסתי להקטיר קטורת לפני ולפנים וראיתי אכתריאל יה ה' צבאות שהוא יושב על כסא רם ונשא ואמר לי ישמעאל בני ברכני אמרתי לו יהי רצון מלפניד שיכבשו רחמיך את כעסך ויגולו רחמיך על מדותיך ותתנהג עם בניך במדת הרחמים ותכנס להם לפנים משורת הדין ונענע לי בראשו וקמשמע לן שלא תהא ברכת הדיוט סלה בעיניד