

## St. Thomas Aquinas

# The Summa Theologica

(Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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[Index](#) [[<<](#) [⬮](#) | [>>](#)]

[First Part of the Second Part](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Question: 48](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

### OF THE EFFECTS OF ANGER (FOUR ARTICLES)

We must now consider the effects of anger: under which head there are four points of inquiry:

- [\(1\)](#) Whether anger causes pleasure?
  - [\(2\)](#) Whether above all it causes heat in the heart?
  - [\(3\)](#) Whether above all it hinders the use of reason?
  - [\(4\)](#) Whether it causes taciturnity?
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[Index](#) [[<<](#) [⬮](#) | [>>](#)]

[First Part of the Second Part](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Question: 48](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Article: 1](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

### Whether anger causes pleasure?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that anger does not cause pleasure. Because sorrow excludes pleasure. But anger is never without sorrow, since, as stated in Ethic. vii, 6, "everyone that acts from anger, acts with pain." Therefore anger does not cause pleasure.

**Objection 2:** Further, the Philosopher says (Ethic. iv, 5) that "vengeance makes anger to cease, because it substitutes pleasure for pain": whence we may gather that the angry man derives pleasure from vengeance, and that vengeance quells his anger. Therefore on the advent of pleasure, anger departs: and consequently anger is not an effect united with pleasure.

**Objection 3:** Further, no effect hinders its cause, since it is conformed to its cause. But pleasure hinders anger as stated in Rhet. ii, 3. Therefore pleasure is not an effect of anger.

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**I answer that,** As the Philosopher says (Ethic. vii, 14), pleasures, chiefly sensible and bodily pleasures, are remedies against sorrow: and therefore the greater the sorrow or anxiety, the more sensible are we to the pleasure which heals it, as is evident in the case of thirst which increases the pleasure of drink. Now it is clear from what has been said ([Question \[47\]](#), [Articles \[1\],3](#)), that the movement of anger arises from a wrong done that causes sorrow, for which sorrow vengeance is sought as a remedy. Consequently as soon as vengeance is present, pleasure ensues, and so much the greater according as the sorrow was greater. Therefore if vengeance be really present, perfect pleasure ensues, entirely excluding sorrow, so that the movement of anger ceases. But before vengeance is really present, it becomes present to the angry man in two ways: in one way, by hope; because none is angry except he hopes for vengeance, as stated above ([Question \[46\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#)); in another way, by thinking of it continually, for to everyone that desires a thing it is pleasant to dwell on the thought of what he desires; wherefore the imaginings of dreams are pleasant. Accordingly an angry man takes pleasure in thinking much about vengeance. This pleasure, however, is not perfect, so as to banish sorrow and consequently anger.

**Reply to Objection 1:** The angry man does not grieve and rejoice at the same thing; he grieves for the wrong done, while he takes pleasure in the thought and hope of vengeance. Consequently sorrow is to anger as its beginning; while pleasure is the effect or terminus of anger.

**Reply to Objection 2:** This argument holds in regard to pleasure caused by the real presence of vengeance, which banishes anger altogether.

**Reply to Objection 3:** Pleasure that precedes hinders sorrow from ensuing, and consequently is a hindrance to anger. But pleasure felt in taking vengeance follows from anger.

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[Index](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[First Part of the Second Part](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Question: 48](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

Article: 2 [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

## Whether anger above all causes fervor in the heart?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that heat is not above all the effect of anger. For fervor, as stated above ([Question \[28\]](#), [Article \[5\]](#); [Question \[37\]](#), [Article \[2\]](#)), belongs to love. But love, as above stated, is the beginning and cause of all the passions. Since then the cause is more powerful than its effect, it seems that anger is not the chief cause of fervor.

**Objection 2:** Further, those things which, of themselves, arouse fervor, increase as time goes on; thus love grows stronger the longer it lasts. But in course of time anger grows weaker; for the Philosopher says (Rhet. ii, 3) that "time puts an end to anger." Therefore fervor is not the proper effect of anger.

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greater anger banishes already existing anger," as the Philosopher says (Rhet. ii, 3). Therefore anger does not cause fervor.

**On the contrary**, Damascene says (De Fide Orth. ii, 16) that "anger is fervor of the blood around the heart, resulting from an exhalation of the bile."

**I answer that**, As stated above ([Question \[44\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#)), the bodily transmutation that occurs in the passions of the soul is proportionate to the movement of the appetite. Now it is evident that every appetite, even the natural appetite, tends with greater force to repel that which is contrary to it, if it be present: hence we see that hot water freezes harder, as though the cold acted with greater force on the hot object. Since then the appetitive movement of anger is caused by some injury inflicted, as by a contrary that is present; it follows that the appetite tends with great force to repel the injury by the desire of vengeance; and hence ensues great vehemence and impetuosity in the movement of anger. And because the movement of anger is not one of recoil, which corresponds to the action of cold, but one of prosecution, which corresponds to the action of heat, the result is that the movement of anger produces fervor of the blood and vital spirits around the heart, which is the instrument of the soul's passions. And hence it is that, on account of the heart being so disturbed by anger, those chiefly who are angry betray signs thereof in their outer members. For, as Gregory says (Moral. v, 30) "the heart that is inflamed with the stings of its own anger beats quick, the body trembles, the tongue stammers, the countenance takes fire, the eyes grow fierce, they that are well known are not recognized. With the mouth indeed he shapes a sound, but the understanding knows not what it says."

**Reply to Objection 1**: "Love itself is not felt so keenly as in the absence of the beloved," as Augustine observes (De Trin. x, 12). Consequently when a man suffers from a hurt done to the excellence that he loves, he feels his love thereof the more: the result being that his heart is moved with greater heat to remove the hindrance to the object of his love; so that anger increases the fervor of love and makes it to be felt more.

Nevertheless, the fervor arising from heat differs according as it is to be referred to love or to anger. Because the fervor of love has a certain sweetness and gentleness; for it tends to the good that one loves: whence it is likened to the warmth of the air and of the blood. For this reason sanguine temperaments are more inclined to love; and hence the saying that "love springs from the liver," because of the blood being formed there. On the other hand, the fervor of anger has a certain bitterness with a tendency to destroy, for it seeks to be avenged on the contrary evil: whence it is likened to the heat of fire and of the bile, and for this reason Damascene says (De Fide Orth. ii, 16) that it "results from an exhalation of the bile whence it takes its name {chole}."

**Reply to Objection 2**: Time, of necessity, weakens all those things, the causes of which are impaired by time. Now it is evident that memory is weakened by time; for things which happened long ago easily slip from our memory. But anger is caused by the memory of a wrong done. Consequently the cause of anger is impaired little by little as time goes on, until at length it vanishes altogether. Moreover a wrong seems greater when it is first felt; and our estimate thereof is gradually lessened the further the sense of present wrong recedes into the past. The same applies to love, so long as the cause of love is in the memory alone; wherefore the Philosopher says (Ethic. viii, 5) that "if a friend's absence lasts long, it seems to make men forget their friendship." But in the presence of a friend, the cause of friendship is continually being multiplied by time: wherefore the friendship increases: and the same would apply to anger, were its cause continually multiplied.

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[Donate bitcoin.](#) St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [FS](#) » [FS048.html](#) as a great fire is soon spent having burnt up all the fuel; so too anger, by reason of its vehemence, soon dies away.

**Reply to Objection 3:** Every power that is divided in itself is weakened. Consequently if a man being already angry with one, becomes angry with another, by this very fact his anger with the former is weakened. Especially is this so if his anger in the second case be greater: because the wrong done which aroused his former anger, will, in comparison with the second wrong, which is reckoned greater, seem to be of little or no account.

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[Index](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[First Part of the Second Part](#) [[<](#) | [>](#)]

[Question: 48](#) [[<](#) | [>](#)]

[Article: 3](#) [[<](#) | [>](#)]

## Whether anger above all hinders the use of reason?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that anger does not hinder the use of reason. Because that which presupposes an act of reason, does not seem to hinder the use of reason. But "anger listens to reason," as stated in Ethic. vii, 6. Therefore anger does not hinder reason.

**Objection 2:** Further, the more the reason is hindered, the less does a man show his thoughts. But the Philosopher says (Ethic. vii, 6) that "an angry man is not cunning but is open." Therefore anger does not seem to hinder the use of reason, as desire does; for desire is cunning, as he also states (Ethic. vii, 6.).

**Objection 3:** Further, the judgment of reason becomes more evident by juxtaposition of the contrary: because contraries stand out more clearly when placed beside one another. But this also increases anger: for the Philosopher says (Rhet. ii, 2) that "men are more angry if they receive unwonted treatment; for instance, honorable men, if they be dishonored": and so forth. Therefore the same cause increases anger, and facilitates the judgment of reason. Therefore anger does not hinder the judgment of reason.

**On the contrary,** Gregory says (Moral. v, 30) that anger "withdraws the light of understanding, while by agitating it troubles the mind."

**I answer that,** Although the mind or reason makes no use of a bodily organ in its proper act, yet, since it needs certain sensitive powers for the execution of its act, the acts of which powers are hindered when the body is disturbed, it follows of necessity that any disturbance in the body hinders even the judgment of reason; as is clear in the case of drunkenness or sleep. Now it has been stated ([Article \[2\]](#)) that anger, above all, causes a bodily disturbance in the region of the heart, so much as to effect even the outward members. Consequently, of all the passions, anger is the most manifest obstacle to the judgment of reason, according to Ps. 30:10: "My eye is troubled with wrath."

**Reply to Objection 1:** The beginning of anger is in the reason, as regards the appetitive movement, which is the formal element of anger. But the passion of anger forestalls the perfect judgment of reason, as though it listened but imperfectly to reason, on account of the

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**Reply to Objection 2:** An angry man is said to be open, not because it is clear to him what he ought to do, but because he acts openly, without thought of hiding himself. This is due partly to the reason being hindered, so as not to discern what should be hidden and what done openly, nor to devise the means of hiding; and partly to the dilatation of the heart which pertains to magnanimity which is an effect of anger: wherefore the Philosopher says of the magnanimous man (Ethic. iv, 3) that "he is open in his hatreds and his friendships... and speaks and acts openly." Desire, on the other hand, is said to lie low and to be cunning, because, in many cases, the pleasurable things that are desired, savor of shame and voluptuousness, wherein man wishes not to be seen. But in those things that savor of manliness and excellence, such as matters of vengeance, man seeks to be in the open.

**Reply to Objection 3:** As stated above (ad 1), the movement of anger begins in the reason, wherefore the juxtaposition of one contrary with another facilitates the judgment of reason, on the same grounds as it increases anger. For when a man who is possessed of honor or wealth, suffers a loss therein, the loss seems all the greater, both on account of the contrast, and because it was unforeseen. Consequently it causes greater grief: just as a great good, through being received unexpectedly, causes greater delight. And in proportion to the increase of the grief that precedes, anger is increased also.

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[Index](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[First Part of the Second Part](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

[Question: 48](#) [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

Article: 4 [[<<](#) | [>>](#)]

## Whether anger above all causes taciturnity?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that anger does not cause taciturnity. Because taciturnity is opposed to speech. But increase in anger conduces to speech; as is evident from the degrees of anger laid down by Our Lord ([Mt. 5:22](#)): where He says: "Whosoever is angry with his brother"; and "... whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca'; and "... whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Thou fool.'" Therefore anger does not cause taciturnity.

**Objection 2:** Further, through failing to obey reason, man sometimes breaks out into unbecoming words: hence it is written ([Prov. 25:28](#)): "As a city that lieth open and is not compassed with walls, so is a man that cannot refrain his own spirit in speaking." But anger, above all, hinders the judgment of reason, as stated above ([Article \[3\]](#)). Consequently above all it makes one break out into unbecoming words. Therefore it does not cause taciturnity.

**Objection 3:** Further, it is written ([Mt. 12:34](#)): "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." But anger, above all, causes a disturbance in the heart, as stated above ([Article \[2\]](#)). Therefore above all it conduces to speech. Therefore it does not cause taciturnity.

**On the contrary,** Gregory says (Moral. v, 30) that "when anger does not vent itself outwardly by the lips, inwardly it burns the more fiercely."

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[Donate bitcoin](#). St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [FS](#) » [FS048.html](#) act of reason, and hinders the reason: and in both respects it may cause taciturnity. On the part of the reason, when the judgment of reason prevails so far, that although it does not curb the appetite in its inordinate desire for vengeance, yet it curbs the tongue from unbridled speech. Wherefore Gregory says (Moral. v, 30): "Sometimes when the mind is disturbed, anger, as if in judgment, commands silence." On the part of the impediment to reason because, as stated above ([Article \[2\]](#)), the disturbance of anger reaches to the outward members, and chiefly to those members which reflect more distinctly the emotions of the heart, such as the eyes, face and tongue; wherefore, as observed above ([Article \[2\]](#)), "the tongue stammers, the countenance takes fire, the eyes grow fierce." Consequently anger may cause such a disturbance, that the tongue is altogether deprived of speech; and taciturnity is the result.

**Reply to Objection 1:** Anger sometimes goes so far as to hinder the reason from curbing the tongue: but sometimes it goes yet farther, so as to paralyze the tongue and other outward members.

And this suffices for the Reply to the Second Objection.

**Reply to Objection 3:** The disturbance of the heart may sometimes superabound to the extend that the movements of the outward members are hindered by the inordinate movement of the heart. Thence ensue taciturnity and immobility of the outward members; and sometimes even death. If, however, the disturbance be not so great, then "out of the abundance of the heart" thus disturbed, the mouth proceeds to speak.