

## QUESTION 38

### The Remedies for Pain or Sadness

Next we have to consider the remedies for pain or sadness. And on this topic there are five questions: (1) Is pain or sadness lessened by every instance of pleasure? (2) Is pain or sadness lessened by weeping? (3) Is pain or sadness lessened by the compassion of friends? (4) Is pain or sadness lessened by contemplating the truth? (5) Is pain or sadness lessened by sleeping and bathing?

#### Article 1

##### Is pain or sadness lessened by every instance of pleasure?

It seems not to be the case that every instance of pleasure lessens every instance of pain or sadness:

**Objection 1:** Pleasure lessens sadness only insofar as it is contrary to it; for as *Ethics 2* says, “Medicines are made from contraries.” But as was explained above (q. 35, a. 4), not every instance of pleasure is contrary to every instance of sadness. Therefore, it is not the case that every instance of pleasure lessens every instance of sadness.

**Objection 2:** What causes sadness does not lessen sadness. But some instances of pleasure cause sadness, since, as *Ethics 9* says, “A bad man is saddened because he has taken pleasure (*quoniam delectatus est*).” Therefore, it is not the case that every instance of pleasure lessens sadness.

**Objection 3:** In *Confessiones 4* Augustine says that he left his homeland, where he had been accustomed to sharing his life with his friend who was now dead, because his eyes would seek his friend less where he was not accustomed to seeing him. From this one can infer that what our dead or absent friends have shared with us becomes onerous to us when we grieve over their death or their absence. But what they especially shared with us were our pleasures. Therefore, those very pleasures become onerous to us when we are grieving. Therefore, it is not the case that every instance of pleasure lessens every instance of sadness.

**But contrary to this:** In *Ethics 7* the Philosopher says, “Pleasure expels sadness—whether it is a contrary pleasure or just any pleasure at all, if it is strong.”

**I respond:** As is clear from what has already been said (q. 23, a. 4), pleasure is the appetite’s coming to rest in an agreeable good (*quies appetitus in bono convenienti*), whereas sadness has its source in what opposes the appetite. Hence, pleasure is related to pain among the appetitive movements in the same way that, among bodies, rest is related to fatigue (*fatigatio*), which proceeds from a non-natural change. For sadness itself implies a sort of fatigue or sickness on the part of the appetitive power. Therefore, just as any sort of rest on the part of a body affords a remedy against any sort of fatigue, no matter what sort of non-natural cause it stems from, so any instance of pleasure affords a remedy to lessen any instance of sadness, no matter what it stems from.

**Reply to objection 1:** Even if it is not the case that every instance of pleasure is opposed by its species to every instance of pain, nonetheless, as was explained above (q. 35, a. 4), it is opposed to it by its genus. And so as far as the subject’s condition is concerned (*ex parte dispositionis subiecti*), any instance of sadness can be lessened by any instance of pleasure.

**Reply to objection 2:** The pleasures of bad men cause them sadness in the future and not in the present, viz., insofar as the bad men repent of the evils that have given them joy (*poenitent de malis de quibus laetitiam habuerunt*). And this sort of sadness is relieved by contrary pleasures.

**Reply to objection 3:** When there are two causes that give inclinations toward contrary movements, each impedes the other, but the cause that finally wins out is the one that is stronger and more long-lasting.

Now in someone who is grieving over what he used to take pleasure in together with his dead or absent friend, there are two causes moving him in opposite directions. For when he thinks about his

friend's death or absence, this inclines him toward sorrow (*inclinat ad dolorem*), whereas his present good inclines him toward pleasure. Hence, each is diminished by the other. And yet since his present perceptions move him more strongly than do his memories of the past, and since his love for himself remains for a longer time than does his love for the other, in the end it is the pleasure that expels the sadness. Hence, a few lines later in the same place Augustine adds that his sorrow gave way to his former pleasures.

## Article 2

### Does weeping lessen sadness?

It seems that weeping (*fletus*) does not lessen (*non mitigat*) sadness:

**Objection 1:** No effect diminishes (*minuit*) its cause. But weeping or sighing (*fletus vel gemitus*) is an effect of sadness. Therefore, it does not diminish sadness.

**Objection 2:** Just as weeping or sighing is an effect of sadness, so laughing is an effect of rejoicing. But laughing does not diminish rejoicing. Therefore, weeping does not lessen sadness.

**Objection 3:** The bad thing that saddens us is represented in the weeping. But imagining a thing that saddens us increases our sadness, just as imagining a thing that delights us increases our rejoicing. Therefore, it seems that weeping does not lessen sadness.

**But contrary to this:** In *Confessiones* 5 Augustine says that when he was grieving over the death of his friend, it was only in his sighs and tears that he found a little peace.

**I respond:** Tears and sighs naturally lessen sadness, and this in two ways:

First, because every harmful thing afflicts us all the more when it is closed up inside (*interius clausum*), since the soul's attention keeps growing with respect to it. But when it is diffused to the outside, then the soul's attention is in a certain sense dispersed toward exterior things, and so the interior pain is diminished. Because of this, when men who are in distress (*in tristitiis*) manifest their sadness by weeping or sighing, or even by talking (*fletu aut gemitu vel etiam verbo*), their sadness is lessened.

Second, because it is always the case that an operation that is appropriate for a man, given the condition he is in, is pleasurable to him. But weeping and sighing are operations appropriate for someone who is sad or in pain. And so they become pleasurable to him. Therefore, since, as has been explained (a. 1), every instance of pleasure in some way lessens sadness or pain, it follows that sadness is lessened by lamenting and sighing.

**Reply to objection 1:** The relation of a cause to its effect is itself contrary to the relation of what causes sadness to the one who is saddened. For every effect is agreeable to its cause and, as a result, pleases it, whereas a thing that causes sadness is contrary to the one who is sad. And so the effect of sadness bears to the one who is sad a relation that is contrary to the relation that the thing that causes sadness bears to the one who is sad. And because of this, sadness is lessened by an effect of sadness, by reason of the contrariety just explained.

**Reply to objection 2:** The relation that an effect bears to its cause is similar to the relation that someone who takes pleasure bears to that which gives pleasure, since there is agreeableness in both cases. But everything augments what is similar to itself. And this is why rejoicing is augmented by laughter and by the other effects of rejoicing—unless perhaps *per accidens*, because of its excessiveness, [the laughter lessens the rejoicing].

**Reply to objection 3:** Imagining the thing that effects the sadness, taken in its own right (*quantum est de se*), is apt to increase the sadness, but a certain pleasure arises from the very fact that a man imagines that which effects what is agreeable to him, given his condition. And for the same reason, as Tully points out in *De Tusculanis Quaestionibus* 3, if one bursts out laughing in a situation in which he

should be mourning, then he is saddened by the very fact that he is doing something inappropriate.

### Article 3

#### Does the pain of a compassionate friend lessen sadness?

It seems that the pain of a compassionate friend does not lessen sadness:

**Objection 1:** It is contraries that are the effects of contraries. But as Augustine says in *Confessiones* 8, “When one rejoices with many others, each one has a more exuberant joy, since they are kindled and inflamed one by the other.” Therefore, by parity of reasoning, when many are sad together, then it seems that there is more sadness.

**Objection 2:** As Augustine points out in *Confessiones* 4, friendship requires that each one give back to his friend in kind. But a friend who suffers with another (*amicus condolens*) grieves over the sadness of his sorrowful friend. Therefore, the friend who is already suffering his own evil is such that the compassionate friend’s sorrow for him is itself a cause of his suffering another’s evil. And so, since his pain is doubled, sadness seems to increase.

**Objection 3:** Every evil that belongs to a friend makes one sad in the same way that one’s own evil does, since “a friend is another self” (*amicus est alter ipse*). But pain is something bad. Therefore, the pain of a compassionate friend augments the pain of the friend with whom he is suffering.

**But contrary to this:** In *Ethics* 9 the Philosopher says that in sorrows a friend who suffers with someone consoles him.

**I respond:** A friend who suffers with someone in his sorrows naturally consoles him (*naturaliter amicus condolens in tristitiis est consolativus*). In *Ethics* 9 the Philosopher touches on two reasons for this:

The first is that since sadness weighs down the mind, it has the character of a burden that the one who is weighed down tries to have lightened. Therefore, when someone sees others saddened by his own sadness, he imagines that others are bearing that burden with him, trying, as it were, to make the burden lighter for him. And so he bears a lighter burden of sadness, as likewise happens in cases where one is carrying corporeal burdens.

The second, and better, reason is that by the fact that his friends are saddened for him, he sees that he is loved by them—and, as was explained above (q. 32, a. 5), this is pleasurable. Hence, since, as was explained above (a. 1), every instance of pleasure lessens sadness, it follows that a friend who suffers along with another lessens sadness.

**Reply to objection 1:** Friendship is shown in both respects, i.e., both in the fact that one rejoices with his rejoicing friend, and also in the fact that he suffers with his suffering friend. And each is rendered pleasurable by reason of the cause.

**Reply to objection 2:** The friend’s suffering itself makes one sad in its own right. But when one considers the cause of the pain, viz., love, he takes pleasure to a greater degree.

**Reply to objection 3:** This makes clear the reply to the third objection.

### Article 4

#### Does contemplating the truth lessen pain?

It seems that contemplating the truth does not lessen pain (*contemplatio veritatis non mitiget dolorem*):

**Objection 1:** Ecclesiastes 1:18 says, “He who adds knowledge also adds pain.” But knowledge has to do with contemplating the truth. Therefore, it is not the case that contemplating the truth lessens pain.

**Objection 2:** Contemplating the truth belongs to the speculative intellect. But as *De Anima* 3 says, “The speculative intellect does not effect movement.” Therefore, since joy and pain are certain movements of the soul, it seems that contemplating the truth does nothing to lessen pain.

**Objection 3:** The remedy for a disease has to be applied where the disease is. But the contemplation of truth exists in the intellect. Therefore, it does not lessen pain, which exists in the sensory power.

**But contrary to this:** In *Soliloquia* 1 Augustine says, “It seemed to me that if the splendor of truth had opened itself to our minds, then either I would not have felt that pain, or at least I would not have endured it for nothing.”

**I respond:** As was explained above (q. 3, a. 5), the greatest pleasure consists in contemplating the truth. But as was also explained above (a. 1), every pleasure lessens pain. And so contemplating the truth lessens sadness or pain; and the more perfectly someone is a lover of wisdom, the more it does so.

Moreover, it is because of the contemplation of God and of future beatitude that men rejoice in the midst of tribulations—this according to James 1:2 (“My brethren, count it all joy when you encounter various trials”). What’s more, joy of this sort is found even in the midst of bodily tortures; for instance, when the martyr Tiburtius was walking barefoot on the burning coals, he said, “It seems to me that I am walking on roses in the name of Jesus Christ.”

**Reply to objection 1:** He who adds knowledge adds pain either because of the difficulty and failures involved in finding the truth (*propter difficultatem et defectum inveniendae veritatis*), or because through knowledge a man comes to recognize many things that are contrary to his will. And so on the side of the things known, knowledge causes pain, whereas on the part of the act of contemplating the truth, it causes pleasure.

**Reply to objection 2:** The speculative intellect does not move the mind through the thing that is being thought of (*ex parte rei speculatae*), but it does move the mind through the act of speculating itself, which is a certain human good and naturally pleasurable.

**Reply to objection 3:** There is an overflow in the powers of the soul from the higher ones to the lower ones. Accordingly, the pleasure of contemplating, which is in the higher part, overflows to lessen even that pain that exists in the sensory power.

## Article 5

### Do sleeping and bathing lessen sadness?

It seems that sleeping and bathing (*somnus et balneum*) do not lessen sadness:

**Objection 1:** Sadness exists in the soul. But sleeping and bathing have to do with the body. Therefore, they do nothing to lessen sadness.

**Objection 2:** It seems that the same effect cannot be caused by contrary causes. But since causes of the sort in question are corporeal, they are opposed to the contemplation of the truth, which, as has been explained (a. 4), causes the lessening of sadness. Therefore, sadness is not lessened by causes of the sort in question.

**Objection 3:** Insofar as sadness and pain have to do with the body, they consist in a certain change within the heart. But remedies of the sort in question seem to have to do with the exterior senses and exterior bodily members rather than with the interior condition of the heart. Therefore, sadness is not lessened by remedies of this sort.

**But contrary to this:** In *Confessiones* 9 Augustine says, “I had heard that the name ‘bath’ (*balneum*; Greek: *βαλανεῖον*) comes from the fact that a bath drives anxiety from the mind.” And further on he says: “I slept, and woke up again, and found that my pain was more than a little lessened.” And he quotes the words from the hymn of Ambrose, which says, “Sleep restores the tired limbs to labor, refreshes the weary mind, and banishes anxious sorrows.”

**I respond:** As was explained above (q. 37, a. 4), in its species sadness is opposed to the body’s vital motion. And so the things that restore corporeal nature to the normal state of its vital motion are opposed to sadness and lessen it. Moreover, by the fact remedies of the sort in question bring the nature back to its normal condition, they are a cause of pleasure; for, as was explained above (q. 31, a. 3), this is something that gives pleasure. Hence, since every instance of pleasure lessens sadness, sadness is lessened by corporeal remedies of this sort.

**Reply to objection 1:** Insofar as it is felt, the normal condition of the body is itself such that it causes pleasure and, as a result, lessens sadness.

**Reply to objection 2:** As was explained above (q. 31, a. 8), one pleasure impedes another, and yet every instance of pleasure lessens sadness. Hence, it is not problematic for sadness to be lessened by causes that impede one another.

**Reply to objection 3:** As the book *De Causa Motus Animalium* explains, every good bodily disposition overflows in a certain way to the heart, which is the beginning and the end of corporeal motions.