

QUESTION 44

The Effects of Fear

Next we have to consider the effects of fear. And on this topic there are four questions: (1) Does fear make one to be drawn inward (*facit contractionem*)? (2) Does fear make one deliberative (*faciat consiliativos*)? (3) Does fear make one quiver (*faciat tremorem*)? (4) Does fear impede an operation (*impediat operationem*)?

Article 1

Does fear make one to be drawn inward?

It seems that fear does not make one to be drawn inward (*non faciat contractionem*):

Objection 1: When one is drawn inward (*contractione facta*), heat and animal spirits are drawn back toward the interior parts of the body (*ad interiora revocantur*). But when heat and the spirits are increased within, the heart is enlarged for boldly doing something aggressive (*ad audacter aliquid aggrediendum*), as is clear in case of those who are angry. But this is contrary to what happens in the case of fear. Therefore, fear does not make one to be drawn inward.

Objection 2: When heat and the spirits are increased within by a man's being drawn inward, what follows is that he bursts out loudly (*in vocem prorumpat*), as is clear in the case of those who are in pain (*ut patet in dolentibus*). But those who are afraid do not emit sounds; instead, they are rendered speechless. Therefore, fear does not make one to be drawn inward.

Objection 3: As was explained above (q. 41, a. 4), shame (*verecundia*) is a species of fear. But as Tully points out in *De Tusculanis Quaestionibus* 4 and as the Philosopher says in *Ethics* 6, those who are ashamed blush (*rubescunt*). And redness in the face attests not to being drawn inward, but to the opposite. Therefore, it is not an effect of fear that one is drawn inward.

But contrary to this: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 3 Damascene says, "Fear is a virtue (*virtus*) that involves *sustole*," i.e., being drawn inward (*idest secundum contractionem*).

I respond: As was explained above (q. 28, a. 5), in the case of the passions of the soul, the movement of the appetitive power is itself like a form, whereas the bodily change is like matter, and the one is proportioned to the other. Hence, the bodily change follows as a likeness to the appetitive movement and in keeping with the character of that movement (*secundum similitudinem et rationem appetitivi motus*).

Now as regards the soul's appetitive movement, fear implies being drawn inward in a certain way (*importat certam contractionem*). The reason for this is that, as was explained above (q. 41, a. 2), fear has its source in the imagining of some imminent evil that can be difficult to repel. But, as was explained above (q. 43, a. 2), the fact that something can be difficult to repel finds its source in the weakness of one's power. And to the extent that a power is weaker, it extends to fewer things. In this sense, an instance of being drawn inward follows from the very act of imagining that causes the fear. In the same way, we see in the case of those who are dying that their nature is drawn back toward the inside because of the weakness of their power. And we likewise see, in the case of cities, that when the citizens are afraid, they withdraw from the outer parts of the city and retreat as far as possible into the interior parts.

And by a likeness to this drawing inward that belongs to the soul's appetite, there is also in the case of fear, on the part of the body, a drawing of heat and spirits inward toward the interior parts of the body.

Reply to objection 1: As the Philosopher says in *De Problematibus*, even if, in those who are afraid, the spirits are drawn from the exterior parts of the body to the interior parts, the movement of the spirits is nonetheless not the same in those who are angry and those who are afraid.

For in the case of those who are angry, because of the heat and subtlety of the spirits that has its source in the desire for retribution, the interior movement of the spirits is from the lower parts of the body

to the upper parts and so the spirits and heat gather around the heart. And the result of this is that those who are angry are rendered quick to attack and daring.

By contrast, in the case of those who are afraid, because of a coldness that thickens them (*propter frigiditatem ingrossantem*), the spirits move from the higher parts of the body to the lower parts, where this coldness results from imagining one's lack of power. And so the heat and spirits do not multiply around the heart, but instead withdraw from the heart. And because of this, those who are afraid are not quick to attack, but instead withdraw.

Reply to objection 2: It is natural for any being that is in pain, whether human or animal, to use whatever assistance he can to repel the harmful thing that is present and inflicting the pain. Hence, we see that animals in pain strike back with their jaws or their horns. Now the greatest assistance for everything in animals is heat and animal spirits. And so in an instance of pain, the nature conserves the heat and the animal spirits internally, in order to use them to repel what is harmful. This is why in *De Problematibus* the Philosopher says that when the heat and the spirits are increased inwardly, they have to be expressed vocally. And because of this, those who are in pain can scarcely keep themselves from crying out.

By contrast, as has been explained, in those who are afraid there is a movement of the interior heat and spirits away from the heart toward the lower parts of the body. And so fear counteracts the formation of sounds, which are effected by the emission of spirits toward the higher parts through the mouth. And it is because of this that fear renders people speechless. And this is also why fear makes one quiver, as the Philosopher points out in *De Problematibus*.

Reply to objection 3: The danger of death is not only contrary to the soul's desire but also contrary to the nature. Because of this, in the case of this sort of fear, there is a drawing inward not only on the part of the appetite, but also on the part of the body's nature. For an animal that draws heat toward the interior parts of the body because it is imagining death is disposed in the same way that it is when death is naturally imminent. And this is why, as *Ethics 4* says, "Those who are fearing death turn pale."

By contrast, the evil that is feared by shame is opposed only to the soul's desire and not to the nature. And so there is, to be sure, a turning inward by the soul's appetite, but not by the body's nature. Instead, the soul—drawn into itself, as it were—gives free rein to the movement of heat and of the spirits. Hence, they are diffused to the exterior parts of the body. And this is why those who are ashamed blush.

Article 2

Does fear make one deliberative?

It seems that fear does not make one deliberative (*non faciat consiliativos*):

Objection 1: The same thing does not both make one deliberative and impede deliberation. But fear impedes deliberation, since every passion disturbs the quiet that is required for the good use of reason. Therefore, fear does not make one deliberative.

Objection 2: Deliberation is an act of reason by which it thinks and deliberates about future matters. But certain instances of fear "drive away thought and displace reason," as Tully puts it in *De Tusculanis Quaestionibus 4*. Therefore, fear does not make one deliberative, but instead impedes deliberation.

Objection 3: Just as deliberation is used for avoiding evils, so, too, it is used for pursuing goods. But just as fear has to do with evils to be avoided, so, too, hope has to do with goods to be pursued. Therefore, fear does not make one deliberative more than hope does.

But contrary to this: As the Philosopher says in *Rhetoric 2*, "Fear makes one deliberative (*timor*

consiliativos facit).”

I respond: There are two senses in which someone can be called ‘deliberative’:

The first is in virtue of one’s willing to, i.e., taking care to, deliberate (*voluntate seu sollicitudine consiliandi*). And this is the sense in which fear makes one deliberative. For as the Philosopher says in *Ethics* 3, “We deliberate about big matters with respect to which we distrust ourselves, as it were.” For as has already been explained (q. 42, a. 2), the things that strike fear into us are not just bad simply speaking, but have a certain magnitude, both because they are apprehended as things that can be repelled only with difficulty, and also because they are apprehended as being close by. Hence, it is especially in the presence of fear that men seek to deliberate.

In a second way, someone is called deliberative because he has the ability to deliberate well. And in this sense, neither fear nor any other passion makes one deliberative. For when a man is affected by a passion, things seem to him either greater or smaller than they are in reality (*secundum rei veritatem*); for instance, to a lover, the things that he loves seem better, and to one who fears, the things that he fears seem more fearsome. And so due to this lack of rectitude in judging, each passion as such (*quantum est de se*) impedes the ability to deliberate well.

Reply to objection 1: This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

Reply to objection 2: The stronger a given passion is, the more the man affected by it is impeded. And so when his fear is strong (*fortis*), a man wills to deliberate, but he is so perturbed in his thoughts that he cannot succeed in his deliberation (*consilium adinvenire non potest*). On the other hand, if his fear is a weak one (*parvus timor*) that makes him take care to deliberate, then it does not disturb reason very much and can even contribute to his ability to deliberate well—this by reason of the care that results from the fear.

Reply to objection 3: Hope, too, makes one deliberative, since, as the Philosopher says in *Rhetoric* 2, “No one deliberates about matters with respect to which he despairs”—in the same way that, as *Ethics* 3 points out, no one deliberates about what is impossible.

However, fear makes one more deliberative than hope does. For hope has to do with what is good to the extent that we are able to attain it, whereas fear has to do with what is bad insofar as it can hardly be repelled; and so fear deals with the nature of the difficult to a greater degree than hope does. But as has been explained, we deliberate about difficult matters, especially those with respect to which we do not trust ourselves.

Article 3

Is quivering an effect of fear?

It seems that quivering or trembling (*tremor*) is not an effect of fear:

Objection 1: Quivering has its source in coldness; for instance, we see that those who are very cold quiver. But fear does not seem to cause coldness; instead, it seems to cause a dry heat (*calorem dissicantem*), an indication of which is that those are afraid get thirsty—especially in the case of the greatest fears, as is clear with those who are being led off to death. Therefore, fear does not cause quivering.

Objection 2: The emission of excrement has its source in heat; hence, medicines that serve as laxatives are, for the most part, hot. But such emissions of excrement happen frequently in the presence of fear. Therefore, fear seems to cause heat. And so it does not cause quivering.

Objection 3: When fear occurs, heat is withdrawn from the exterior parts of the body to the interior parts. Therefore, if it were because of this sort of withdrawal that a man quivers in his exterior parts, then it seems that quivering should be caused by fear in all the exterior members. But this does not

seem to be the case. Therefore, the body's quivering is not an effect of fear.

But contrary to this: In *De Tusculanis Quaestionibus* 4 Tully says, "Terror is followed by quivering, pallor, and the chattering of the teeth."

I respond: As was explained above (a. 1), in the case of fear there is a certain drawing inward from the exterior parts of the body to the interior parts, and so the exterior parts remain cold. And because of this they are affected by quivering, which is caused by a weakness in the power that controls the members (*causatur ex debilitate virtutis continentis membra*). And this sort of weakness is especially brought about by a lack of heat, which, as *De Anima* 2 explains, is the instrument by which the soul effects movement.

Reply to objection 1: When heat is withdrawn from the exterior parts of the body into the interior parts, the interior heat increases, and especially with respect to the lower parts, i.e., with respect to the nutritive power. And so, since moisture is consumed, thirst follows and also sometimes the loosening of the bowels, along with the emission of urine and sometimes even of semen.

An alternative reply is that, as the Philosopher claims in *De Problematibus*, bodily emissions of the sort in question occur because of contractions in the abdomen and testicles.

Reply to objection 2: This makes clear the reply to the second objection.

Reply to objection 3: Since, in the presence of fear, heat leaves the heart and goes from the higher parts of the body to the lower parts, what mainly quivers in those who are afraid are the heart and those members that have some connection to the chest, where the heart is. Hence, those who are afraid have quivering especially in the voice, because of the closeness of the windpipe to the heart. The lower lip also quivers, along with the whole of the lower jaw, because of their connection to the heart, and from this follows the chattering of the teeth. And for the same reason, the arms and hands quiver.

Another, additional, reply is that the members that quiver are the ones that are more mobile. This is why the knees also quiver in those who are afraid—this according to Isaiah 35:3 ("Strengthen feeble hands, and firm up trembling knees").

Article 4

Does fear impede an operation?

It seems that fear impedes an operation (*impedit operationem*):

Objection 1: An operation is impeded most of all by a disturbance in reason, which directs one's work. But as has been explained (a. 2), fear disturbs reason. Therefore, fear impedes an operation.

Objection 2: Those who do something in the presence of fear fail more easily in their acting. For instance, if someone is walking on top of a log positioned in a high place, it is easy for him to fall because of his fear, whereas, because of a lack of fear, he would not fall if he walked on the same log positioned in a low place. Therefore, fear impedes an operation.

Objection 3: Laziness (*pigritia*), or sluggishness (*segnities*), is a species of fear. But laziness impedes an operation. Therefore, so does fear.

But contrary to this: In Philippians 2:12 the Apostle says, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." But he would not have said this if fear impeded a good operation. Therefore, fear does not impede a good operation.

I respond: A man's exterior operation is caused, to be sure, by the soul as a first mover, but also by the bodily members as instruments. Now it is possible for an operation to be impeded both (a) because of a defect in the instrument or (b) because of a defect in the principal mover.

Thus, as far as the corporeal instruments are concerned, fear, taken in itself (*quantum est de se*), is always apt to impede an exterior operation due to the lack of heat that occurs in the exterior members

because of fear.

However, as far as the soul is concerned, if the fear is moderate and does not disturb reason too much, then it contributes to operating well, insofar as it causes a certain carefulness and makes the man deliberate and act more attentively.

On the other hand, if the fear increases so much that it disturbs reason, then it impedes the operation even on the part of the soul. But in passage quoted above, the Apostle is not talking about this sort of fear.

Reply to objection 1: This makes clear the reply to the first objection.

Reply to objection 2: Those who fall off a log positioned in a high place are suffering from a disturbance in the imagination because of their fear of an imagined fall.

Reply to objection 3: Everyone who is afraid withdraws from what he fears, and so, since laziness (*pigrity*) is the fear of an operation itself insofar as that operation is laborious, it impedes an operation because it holds the will back from it.

By contrast, fear of other things aids an operation to the extent that it inclines the will to do those things by which the man escapes what he fears.