

Cure from
Illness
by Faith

Second Edition

A Compilation from the works of
Sri Aurobindo & the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

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Sri Aurobindo and the Mother**



Sri Aurobindo Society

AUROPUBLICATIONS

POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

Cure from Illness

by Faith

Second Edition

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Vijaybhai's Note on Comprehensive Compilation

All over the world, there is a growing interest in spirituality and Yoga. There is a search for the true meaning and purpose of life, for deeper solutions to the problems that confront us all, and for ways in which we can contribute to evolutionary change and progress.

In this search, more and more people are turning to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for guidance and enlightenment. But in their voluminous writings, they do not know where to find the answers they are looking for.

In this regard the Mother has said,

"It is not by books that Sri Aurobindo ought to be studied but by subjects—what he has said on the Divine, on Unity, on religion, on evolution, on education, on self-perfection, on supermind, etc., etc."

(CWM 12: 206)

On another occasion She said:

"If you want to know what Sri Aurobindo has said on a given subject, you must at least read all he has written on that subject. You will then see that he seems to have said the most contradictory things. But when one has read everything and understood a little, one sees that all the contradictions complement

one another and are organised and unified in an integral synthesis."

(CWM 16: 309–310)

While several compilations are now available, many sincere spiritual seekers have felt the need for Comprehensive Compilations from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on specific subjects, in which the contents are further organised into sub-topics, so that one can find everything one is looking for in one place.

This compilation is an effort to fulfil this need and thus help spiritual seekers in their journey and sadhana. We hope that this compilation will help us gain greater mental clarity about a subject so that we can channel our efforts in the right direction. For Sri Aurobindo has written:

"It is always better to make an effort in the right direction; even if one fails the effort bears some result and is never lost."

(CWSA 29: 87)

We will be glad to receive suggestions and feedback from the readers.

Vijay

Preface

This compilation, *Cure from Illness by Faith*, is the fourth and final book in the series of books on Faith. To know what Faith really means, it is recommended that the reader refer to the first book, *Fundamental Faith Required in Yoga*, and, to understand the importance of Faith in Yoga, please refer to the second book, *Faith Precedes Spiritual Experience*. This compilation brings out that Faith not only helps in Yoga but also helps in preventing and curing illness.

The Mother emphasizes that, if one wishes always to progress, one must understand more completely what one already knows.

“For those who want always to progress, there are three major ways of progressing:

- (1) To widen the field of one’s consciousness.
- (2) To understand ever better and more completely what one knows.
- (3) To find the Divine and surrender more and more to His Will.” (CWM 16: 435–436)

The purpose of this comprehensive compilation is to help the reader gain an understanding of how to prevent and cure illness. The headings are intended to guide the reader towards a clearer and deeper understanding.

However, it is important to read the quotations themselves, for the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are infused with a consciousness infinitely higher than our own. Therefore, reading these quotations will also help the reader elevate their consciousness.

The quotations in this compilation are taken from the volumes of *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA) and the *Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM), Second Edition. Each quotation is followed by the title of the book, the volume number, and the page number from which it has been taken.

While the passages from Sri Aurobindo are in the original English, most of the passages from the Mother (selections from her talks and writings) are translations from the original French. We must also bear in mind that the excerpts have been taken out of their original context and that a compilation, by its very nature, is likely to have a personal and subjective approach. A sincere attempt, however, has been made to remain faithful to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Those who would like to read the fuller text are advised to consult *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* (CWSA) and the *Collected Works of the Mother* (CWM), Second Edition.

The section headings have also been provided by the compiler to bring clarity to the selected topic.

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

“This *śraddhā* ... is in reality an influence from the supreme Spirit ... a message from our supramental being which is calling the lower nature to rise out of its petty present to a great self-becoming and self-exceeding. And that which receives the influence and answers to the call is ... the inner soul ...” (CWSA 24: 774)

“Faith in its essence is a light in the soul which turns towards the truth even when the mind doubts or the vital revolts or the physical consciousness denies it. When this extends itself to the instruments, it becomes a fixed belief in the mind, a sort of inner knowledge which resists all apparent denial by circumstances or appearances, a complete confidence, trust, adhesion in the vital and in the physical consciousness, an invariable clinging to the truth in which one has faith even when all is dark around and no cause of hope seems to be there.” (CWSA 29: 89)

Contents

I—Build-Up of the Human Body	1
II—How Do We Get Ill.....	4
III—How to Prevent Illness from Entering the Physical Body	12
IV—Cure from Illness by Faith	16
V—A Powerful Means for Acting on the Body Is Faith	24
VI—How Faith Acts on the Body	29
VII—Spiritual Power Has Cured Illness	32
VIII—How to Help a Sick Patient.....	39
IX—How Medicine Can Be Consistent with Faith.....	42
X—Thoughts and Aphorisms on Illness, Medical Science and Faith	46
XI—Do Not Allow the Physical Illnesses to Interfere with Your Sadhana	52
XII—Earlier the Ashram Was Free from Illness.....	55
XIII—Wrong Ideas About How Illness Is Acquired in Yoga.....	58
XIV—Auto-Suggestions for Restoring Good Health Are Really Faith in a Mental Form.....	60
XV—How to Enable the Divine to Give Back the Health We Have Lost	64
XVI—Good Health	66
XVII—The Absolute Immunity from Illness	72
Other Comprehensive Compilations by Jamshed M. Mavalwalla....	75

I—Build-Up of the Human Body

1.

“This body is built up, on the one side, of a material basis, but rather of material conditions than of physical matter, on the other, of the vibrations of our psychological states. Peace and equanimity and confidence, faith in health, undisturbed repose and cheerfulness and bright gladness constitute this element in it and give it strength and substance.” (CWM 3: 89)

2.

“When one is normal, that is to say, unspoilt by bad teaching and bad example, when one is born and lives in a healthy and relatively balanced and normal environment, the body, spontaneously, without any need for one to intervene mentally or even vitally, has the certitude that even if something goes wrong it will be cured. The body carries within itself the certitude of cure, the certitude that the illness or disorder is sure to disappear. It is only through the false education from the environment that gradually the body is taught that there are incurable diseases, irreparable accidents, and that it can grow old, and all these stories which destroy its faith and trust. But normally, the body of a normal child—the body, I am not speaking of the thought—the body itself feels when something goes wrong that it will certainly be all right

again. And if it is not like that, this means that it has already been perverted. It seems *normal* for it to be in good health, it seems quite abnormal to it if something goes wrong and it falls ill; and in its instinct, its spontaneous instinct, it is sure that everything will be all right." (CWM 9: 164)

3.

"... I [Sri Aurobindo] have never had any hesitation in the use of a spiritual force for all legitimate purposes including the maintenance of health and physical life in myself and in others—that is indeed why the Mother has given flowers, not only as a blessing but as a help in illness. I put a value on the body first as an instrument, *dharmasādhana*, or, more fully, as a centre of manifested personality in action, a basis of spiritual life and activity as of all life and activity upon the earth, but also because for me the body as well as the mind and life is a part of the divine whole, a form of the Spirit and therefore not to be disregarded or despised as something incurably gross and incapable of spiritual realisation or of spiritual use. Matter itself is secretly a form of the Spirit and has to reveal itself as that, can be made to wake to consciousness and evolve and realise the Spirit, the Divine within it. In my view the body as well as the mind and life has to be spiritualised or, one may say, divinised so as to be a fit instrument and receptacle for the realisation and manifestation of the Divine. It has its part

in the divine Lila, even, according to the Vaishnava sadhana, in the joy and beauty of Divine Love. That does not mean that the body has to be valued for its own separate sake or that the creation of a divine body in a future evolution of the whole being has to be contemplated as an end and not a means—that would be a serious error which would not be admissible. In any case, my speculations about an extreme form of divinisation are something in a far distance and are no part of the preoccupations of the spiritual life in the near future.” (CWSA 35: 497–498)

4.

“Yoga is only for those who have brains and bodies strong enough to bear the pressure.” (CWSA 35: 564)

II—How Do We Get Ill

1.

"... for illness is a deformation of the physical nature just as lust, anger, jealousy etc. are deformations of the vital nature and error and prejudice and indulgence of falsehood are deformations of the mental nature." (CWSA 31: 565–566)

2.

"Illness in the body is like impurity in the vital, a thing undesirable and to be rejected." (CWSA 31: 567)

3.

"All illnesses are obviously due to the imperfect nature of the body and the physical nature." (CWSA 31: 550)

4.

"All ill-health is due to some inertia or weakness or to some resistance or wrong movement there [*in the vital*], only it has sometimes a more physical and sometimes a more psychological character. Medicines can counteract the physical results." (CWSA 31: 578)

5.

"The human body has always been in the habit of answering to whatever forces chose to lay hands on it and

illness is the price it pays for its inertia and ignorance. It has to learn to answer to the one Force alone, but that is not easy for it to learn.” (CWSA 31: 570)

“It is a weakness and inertia in the physical nature which makes it undergo and acquiesce in the attacks of illness, instead of refusing and repelling them. That is the character of the material physical in all. It can only be remedied by the Force and Consciousness from above occupying the whole physical being.” (CWSA 31: 570)

“Physical sufferings are due to attacks of the forces of the Ignorance. But if one knows how to do it, one can make them a means of purification. There are however better and less difficult means of purification.” (CWSA 31: 549)

6.

“Illness marks some imperfection or weakness or else opening to adverse touches in the physical nature and is often connected also with some obscurity or disharmony in the lower vital or the physical mind or elsewhere.” (CWSA 31: 580)

7.

“It is neither the vital nor the body that contains these illnesses—it is a force from outside that creates them and the nervous being (physical vital) and the body respond

from habit or inability to throw it away. It is always better not to say, 'I will now have no more illness', it attracts the attention of these malevolent powers and they immediately want to prove that they can still disturb the body. Simply when they come, reject them." (CWSA 31: 562)

8.

"Q: People say that one gets this attack [of illness] on account of working too hard and exposing oneself to the sun and cold winds during the course of it. This suggestion is worrying me.

A: This attack is not due to work or exposure but to the suggestion of an old habit rising from the subconscious. Do not listen to what people say and keep your faith in the Divine's Grace. Everything will become all right in the course of time." (CWM 15: 142)

9.

"Naturally the formation of the body is very important in this sense that if, for instance, one is constantly under the influence of a depression, of pessimism, discouragement, a lack of faith and of trust in life, all this enters, so to say, into one's substance, and then some people, when there is the possibility of an accident, never miss it. Every time there is a chance of something happening to them, they catch it, be it an illness or an accident. You have a whole

field of observation here—it is always the same people who meet with accidents. Others do the same things, have as many chances of having an accident, but they are not touched.” (CWM 6: 2)

10.

“The suggestion [of illness] or touch has to be thrown off at once.

There is a sort of protection round the body which we call the nervous envelope—if this remains strong and refuses entrance to the illness force, then one can remain well even in the midst of plague or other epidemics—if the envelope is pierced or weak, then illness can come in.” (CWSA 31: 558)

11.

“Attacks of illness are attacks of the lower nature or of adverse forces taking advantage of some weakness, opening or response in the nature,—like all other things that come and have got to be thrown away, they come from outside. If one can feel them so coming and get the strength and the habit to throw them away before they can enter the body, then one can remain free from illness. Even when the attack seems to rise from within, that means only that it has not been detected before it entered the subconscious; once in the subconscious, the force that brought it rouses it from there sooner or later and it

invades the system. When you feel it just after it has entered, it is because though it came direct and not through the subconscious, yet you could not detect it while it was still outside. Very often it arrives like that, frontally or more often tangentially from the side, direct, forcing its way through the subtle vital envelope which is our main armour of defence, but it can be stopped there in the envelope itself before it penetrates the material body. Then one may feel some effect, e.g. feverishness or a tendency to cold, but there is not the full invasion of the malady. If it can be stopped earlier or if the vital envelope of itself resists and remains strong, vigorous and intact, then there is no illness; the attack produces no physical effect and leaves no traces." (CWSA 31: 553–554)

12.

"These things and the germs also are only a minor physical instrumentation for something supraphysical.

They [the forces of illness] first weaken or break through the nervous envelope, the aura. If that is strong and whole, a thousand million germs will not be able to do anything to you. The envelope pierced, they attack the subconscious mind in the body, sometimes also the vital mind or mind proper—prepare the illness by fear or thought of illness. The doctors themselves said that in influenza or cholera in the Far East 90 per cent got ill

through fear. Nothing to take away the resistance like fear. But still the subconscious is the main thing.

If the contrary Force is strong in the body, one can move in the midst of plague and cholera and never get contaminated. Plague too, rats dying all around, people passing into Hades. I have seen that myself in Baroda.” (CWSA 31: 569)

13.

“Whatever is wrong in the system can easily be set right—but the first thing necessary is that you should dismiss this fear which hampers the action of the Force and opposes the cure. It is also necessary that you should now abstain finally not only from alcohol and wine, but from sex and smoking. Healthy conditions of living are necessary to help the Force to undo what has been done in the past and restore the full strength and normality of the body.

Fix in yourself the calm and courage of the sadhak. Fear nothing, open yourself, reject the weaknesses that remain—then the progress that had begun here will complete itself and the body also become an abiding place of the true consciousness and force.” (CWSA 31: 569)

14.

“The seeds of these old illnesses remain in the subconscious after they are cured. So when the subconscious is being worked, an adverse push bringing a

general depression may make them sprout up; but they can be counteracted by the Force if you are vigilant and persistent in your sadhana and not remain to trouble.” (CWSA 31: 568)

15.

“The nervous (vital-physical) being supports the body—if it is calm and strong and solid, then the body is well supported and can withstand illness and weakness or, if illness comes, it will bear and more easily get rid of it. If the nervous being is weak, then it is the opposite. If the nervous being is not merely weak, but nervous and unstable, over-sensitive, vehement or excitable, then there is much fluctuation, restlessness, exaltation and depression in the being—there may even be a wrongly acute creative imagination which brings in disorders into the body that are nervous and not physical—there is no physical illness of the heart but there are pains and palpitations, nothing physically wrong with stomach and intestines and yet there is inability to digest—nervous dyspepsia; pains are created in different parts of the body and so on—sometimes there is hysteria.

These conditions are not always native to the body—they are often created by troubles in the life, some disturbing illness or other reasons—but often it is due to some hereditary cause or otherwise native to the system.

Women tend to get like this sometimes if there is disorder of the menstruation.

When there is this tendency of the nervous being, it is imperative to get down peace and strength into the nervous being and not allow it to upset the body or the general system.” (CWSA 31: 563)

16.

“Hostile [*source of illness*] here means hostile to the Yoga. An illness which comes in the ordinary course as the result of physical causes—even though adverse universal forces are the first cause—is an ordinary illness. One brought by the forces hostile to Yoga to upset the system and prevent or disturb progress—without any adequate physical reason—is a hostile attack. It may have the appearance of a cold or any other illness, but to the eye which sees the action of forces and not only the outward symptoms or results, the difference is clear.” (CWSA 31: 554)

III—How to Prevent Illness from Entering the Physical Body

1.

"It is my experience and the Mother's that all illnesses pass through the nervous or vital physical sheath of the subtle consciousness and subtle body before they enter the physical. If one is conscious of the subtle body or with the subtle consciousness, one *can* stop an illness on its way and prevent it from entering the physical body. But it may have come without one's noticing, or when one is asleep or through the subconscious, or in a sudden rush when one is off one's guard; then there is nothing to do but to fight it out from a hold already gained on the body. Let us suppose however that I am always on guard, always conscious, even in sleep—that does not mean that I am immunised in my very nature from all illness. It only means a power of self-defence against it when it tries to come. Self-defence by these inner means may become so strong that the body becomes practically immune as many Yogis are. Still this 'practically' does not mean 'absolutely' for all time." (CWSA 31: 563–564)

2.

"Q: *Illnesses enter through the subtle body, don't they? How can they be stopped?*

III—How to Prevent Illness from Entering the Physical Body

A: Ah! Here we are.... If one is very sensitive, very sensitive—one must be very sensitive—the moment they touch the subtle body and try to pass through, one feels it. It is not like something touching the body, it is a sort of feeling. If you are able to perceive it at that moment, you have still the power to say 'no', and it goes away. But for this one must be extremely sensitive. However, that develops. All these things can be developed methodically by the will. You can become quite conscious of this envelope, and if you develop it sufficiently, you don't even need to look and see, you feel that something has touched you. ...

If you are not conscious at that moment, the next minute or a few minutes later you get a queer sick feeling inside, a cold in the back, a little uneasiness, the beginning of some disharmony; you feel a maladjustment somewhere, as though the general harmony had been disturbed. Then you must concentrate all the more and with a great strength of will keep the faith that nothing can do you harm, nothing can touch you. This suffices, you can throw off the illness at that moment. But you must do this immediately, you understand, you must not wait five minutes, it must be done at once. If you wait too long and begin to feel really an uneasiness somewhere, and something begins to get quite disturbed, then it is good to sit down, concentrate and call the Force, concentrate it on

III—How to Prevent Illness from Entering the Physical Body

the place which is getting disturbed, that is to say, which is beginning to become ill.” (CWM 4: 267–269)

3.

“What I meant was that the body consciousness through old habit of consciousness admits the force of illness and goes through the experiences which are associated with it—e.g. congestion of phlegm in the chest and feeling of suffocation or difficulty of breathing etc. To get rid of that one must awaken a will and consciousness in the body itself that refuses to allow these things to impose themselves upon it. But to get that, still more to get it completely is difficult. One step towards it is to get the inner consciousness separate from the body—to feel that it is not you who are ill but it is only something taking place in the body and not affecting your consciousness. It is then possible to see this separate body consciousness, what it feels, what are its reactions to things, how it works. One can then act on it to change its consciousness and reactions.” (CWSA 31: 564)

4.

“As the body consciousness becomes more open to the Force (it is always the most difficult and the last to open up entirely), this frequent stress of illness will diminish and disappear.” (CWSA 31: 565)

III—How to Prevent Illness from Entering the Physical Body

“The only difficulty in the way of health is a certain obscurity in the body consciousness itself which makes it consent readily to habitual touches of the force that makes for illness; otherwise if the body consciousness as well as the mind and vital were open any illness that came would immediately be dissipated. Keep a quiet and steady will for the opening of the consciousness and the union and do not allow depression or any idea of frustration. Keep also a concentrated call in the heart. With those two things the result is sure.” (CWSA 35: 328)

IV—Cure from Illness by Faith

1.

(Message for the Main Dispensary)

“Finally it is Faith that cures.

Blessings.” (CWM 15: 159)

2.

“Most of them [*illnesses*] can be got rid of almost at once by faith and calling in the force. Those that are chronic are more difficult, but they too can be got rid of by the same means if persistently used.” (CWSA 31: 561)

3.

“If one has faith and is open to the Force, illnesses can of course be removed in that way. What I objected to was the acceptance of illness and taking pleasure in it; that is admissible in Yogas which do not aim at transformation of the physical consciousness, but not here.” (CWSA 31: 566)

“It is possible for her to be cured, but only if she has sufficient and complete faith and can receive the force of the Mother. If she can put herself into the true contact, she will cure.” (CWSA 32: 238)

4.

“What you say is true, the Force was acting before, but it acted with immediate rapidity and completeness only with

IV—Cure from Illness by Faith

those who had sufficient faith and receptivity (mainly sadhaks) or in other good conditions.” (CWSA 35: 501)

5.

“For the Mother’s Force to work fully in the body, the body itself and not only the mind must have faith and be open.” (CWSA 32: 231)

6.

“But it is always the right inner poise, quietude inward and outward, faith, the opening of the body consciousness to the Mother and her Force that are the true means of recovery—other things can only be minor aids and devices.” (CWSA 31: 571)

7.

“To keep quiet and to concentrate, leaving the Force from above to do its work, is the surest way to be cured of anything and everything. There is no illness that can resist that if it is done properly, in time and long enough, with a steady faith and a strong will.” (CWM 15: 148)

8.

“One must never lose hope or faith—there is nothing incurable, and no limit can be set to the power of the Divine.” (CWM 16: 191)

9.

"Q: *I have a severe pain in my throat, neck and the back of my head. The attacks are intolerable and I am losing patience.*

A: You must not lose patience, this does not hasten the cure. On the contrary, you must keep a peaceful faith that you are going to be cured." (CWM 15: 148)

10.

"If you want to get cured there are two conditions. First you must be without fear, absolutely fearless, you understand, and secondly you must have a complete faith in the Divine protection. These two things are essential." (CWM 15: 141)

11.

"Q: *X told me, 'It was a mistake on your part not to inform the Mother about your body which is so thin and weak.' Kindly tell me what to do to improve it.*

A: Do not bother about it and increase your faith in the Divine's Grace.

Blessings." (CWM 15: 141–142)

12.

"Have faith. There is no disease which cannot be cured by the Divine Grace." (CWM 15: 151)

13.

"My dear child, I quite agree with you that there is a power other and much more powerful than that of the doctors and the medicines and I am glad to see that you put your trust in it. Surely it will lead you throughout all difficulties and in spite of all catastrophic warnings. Keep your faith intact and all will be all right." (CWM 15: 156)

14.

"My dear child, now it is time for the faith to become truly active and to stand unshaken against all contradictions. Have the faith, the true faith, that you will be cured and the cure is bound to come." (CWM 15: 149)

"I am enclosing a portrait of two birds with *keen eyesight* to encourage you to have faith that your eyes will be cured.

I shall see what can be done." (CWM 15: 152)

15.

"There is something there that expects the illness, accepts it when it comes and gives it free play. He must learn to keep calm and quiet in the mind and vital being, to refuse to regard the illness and the tendency to it in the body as something normal to it, regarding it rather as something imposed from outside, and he must believe firmly that it must and will go. If he can keep this attitude and open to the true force, the mind and nervous being once

strengthened, the illness and weakness will disappear.”
(CWSA 31: 567)

16.

“Q: *For several days there has been pain in the nape of the neck; I am tired of the remedies our dispensary gives me. I rely on Your Will alone to rid me of this illness.*

A: One must have an unshakable faith to be able to do without medicines.” (CWM 16: 191)

17.

“One should know of what stuff the faith and the trust are made. Because, for instance, if you live normally, under quite normal conditions—without having extravagant ideas and a depressing education—well, through all your youth and usually till you are about thirty, you have an absolute trust in life. If, for example, you are not surrounded by people who, as soon as you have a cold in the head, get into a flurry and rush to the doctor and give you medicines, if you are in normal surroundings and happen to have something—an accident or a slight illness—there is this certainty in the body, this absolute trust that it will be all right: ‘It is nothing, it will pass off. It is sure to go. I shall be quite well tomorrow or in a few days. It will surely be cured’—whatever you may have caught. That is indeed the normal condition of the body. An absolute trust that all life

lies before it and that all will be well. And this helps enormously. One gets cured nine times out of ten, one gets cured very quickly with this confidence: 'It is nothing; what is it after all? Just an accident, it will pass off, it is nothing.' And there are people who keep it for a very long time, a very long time, a kind of confidence—nothing can happen to them. Their life is all before them, fully, and nothing can happen to them. And what will happen to them is of no importance at all: all will be well, necessarily; they have the whole of life before them. Naturally, if you live in surroundings where there are morbid ideas and people pass their time recounting disastrous and catastrophic things, then you may think wrongly. And if you think wrongly, this reacts on your body. Otherwise, the body as it is can keep this confidence till the age of forty or fifty—it depends upon people—some know how to live a normal, balanced life. But the body is quite confident about its life. It is only if thought comes in and brings all kinds of morbid and unhealthy imaginations, as I said, that it changes everything. I have seen instances like that: children who had these little accidents one has when running and playing about: they did not even think about it. And it disappeared immediately. I have seen others whose family has drummed into them since the time they could understand, that everything is dangerous, that there are microbes everywhere, that one must be very careful, that the least wound may prove disastrous, that one must be

altogether on one's guard and take great care that nothing serious happens.... So, they must have their wounds dressed, must be washed with disinfectants, and there they sit wondering: 'What is going to happen to me? Oh! I may perhaps get tetanus, a septic fever....' Naturally, in such cases one loses confidence in life and the body feels the effects keenly. Three-fourths of its resistance disappears. But normally, naturally, it is the body which knows that it must remain healthy, and it knows it has the power to react. And if something happens, it tells this something: 'It is nothing, it will go away, don't think about it, it is over'; and it does go.

That of course is absolute trust." (CWM 5: 296–297)

18.

"You have only to admit that the mind and vital can influence the body—then no difficulty is left. In this action of mind and vital on the body faith and hope have an immense importance. I do not at all mean that they are omnipotent or infallibly effective—that is not so. But they assist the action of any force that can be applied, even of an apparently purely material force like medicine." (CWSA 31: 561–562)

19.

"My dear little X,

If you want my *true way* of seeing things, I must tell you that taking a good dose of faith and confidence in the

IV—Cure from Illness by Faith

Divine Grace is better than all the pills and injections in the world.

With my blessings. I am always with you.” (CWM 17: 194)

20.

“Continue the Nature Cure since you find it helpful, and keep your faith intact and living, because it is essential to the cure.

Blessings.” (CWM 17: 345)

V—A Powerful Means for Acting on the Body Is Faith

1.

“Q: Mother, by a mental effort—for instance, the resolution not to take medicines when one is ill—can one succeed in making the body understand?”

A: That is not enough. A mental resolution is not enough, no. There are subtle reactions in your body which do not obey the mental resolution, it is not enough. Something else is needed. ...

... Mentally, one arrives at very few results, and they are always mixed. Something else is needed. One must pass from the mind into the domain of faith or of a higher consciousness, to be able to act with safety.

It is quite obvious that one of the most powerful means for acting on the body is faith. People who have a simple heart, not a very complicated mind—simple people, you see—who don’t have a very great, very complicated mental development but have a very deep faith, have a great power of action over their bodies, very great. That is why one is quite surprised at times: ‘Here’s a man with a great realisation, an exceptional person, and he is a slave of all the smallest physical things, while this man, well, he is so simple and looks so uncouth, but he has a great faith and goes through difficulties and obstacles like a conqueror!’

V—A Powerful Means for Acting on the Body Is Faith

I don't say that a highly cultured man can't have faith, but it is more difficult, for there is always this mental element which contradicts, discusses, tries to understand, which is difficult to convince, which wants proofs. His faith is less pure. It is necessary, then, to pass on to a higher degree in the evolutionary spiral, pass from the mental to the spiritual; then, naturally, faith takes on a quality of a very high order. But I mean that in daily life, ordinary life, a very simple man who has a very ardent faith can have a mastery over his body—without it being truly a 'mastery'; it is simply a spontaneous movement—a control over his body far greater than somebody who has reached a much higher development." (CWM 9: 124–126)

2.

"One could say in conclusion that it is the faith of the patient which gives the remedy its power to heal.

If men had an absolute faith in the healing power of Grace, they would perhaps avoid many illnesses." (CWM 10: 322)

3.

"These congenital diseases can be cured only by an integral transformation of the body itself and we have not reached yet that period in the sadhana; otherwise it is only a so-called 'miraculous cure' that can take place and that kind of 'miracle' can happen only as the result of an

absolute sincerity in the consecration to the Divine and an unshakable faith in the Divine Grace.” (CWM 15: 152)

“How ‘unnoticed’? She got cured! Man of little faith!” (CWM 15: 153)

4.

“When one is very young and as I say ‘well-born’, that is, born with a conscious psychic being within, there is always, in the dreams of the child, a kind of aspiration, which for its child’s consciousness is a sort of ambition, for something which would be beauty without ugliness, justice without injustice, goodness without limits, and a conscious, constant success, a perpetual miracle. One dreams of miracles when one is young, one wants all wickedness to disappear, everything to be always luminous, beautiful, happy, one likes stories which end happily. This is what one should rely on. ...

On the contrary, you must tell a child—or yourself if you are no longer quite a baby—‘Everything in me that seems unreal, impossible, illusory, *that* is what is true, *that* is what I must cultivate’. When you have these aspirations: ‘Oh, not to be always limited by some incapacity, all the time held back by some bad will!’, you must cultivate within you this certitude *that* that is what is essentially true and that is what must be realised.

Then faith awakens in the cells of the body. And you will see that you find a response in your body itself. The body itself will feel that if its inner will helps, fortifies, directs, leads, well, all its limitations will gradually disappear.” (CWM 9: 163)

5.

“And the last stage, when the cells have faith in the divine Presence and in the sovereign divine Will, when they have this trust that all is for the good, then ecstasy comes—the cells open, like this, become luminous and ecstatic.” (CWM 10: 169)

6.

“But when from the mental and vital stage of the Yoga one comes down into the physical, this condition which is native to the physical consciousness fully manifests and is persistent for long periods. It happens because one has to come down and deal with this part directly by entering into it,— for if that is not done, there can be no complete change of the nature. What has to be done is to understand that it is a stage and to persist in the faith that it will be overcome. If this is done, then it will be easier for the Force, working behind the veil at first, then in front to bring out the Yoga consciousness into this outer physical shell and make it luminous and responsive. If one keeps steadily the faith and quietude, then this can be more quickly

V—A Powerful Means for Acting on the Body Is Faith
done—if the faith gets eclipsed or the quietude disturbed
by the long difficulty, then it takes longer ...” (CWSA 31:
363)

7.

“Yes, if the faith and opening are there, medicines are not
indispensable.” (CWSA 31: 578)

VI—How Faith Acts on the Body

1.

“The faith is in your active consciousness and your will, but it is not yet in your body; that is why your body feels tired and suffers; you must give it some rest. Until you know how to organise your work and eliminate all the useless coming and going, it would be better to give up the sweeping work and leave it to a servant; or if you insist on doing the sweeping, you should find someone to take care of your garden.” (CWM 17: 12–13)

2.

“There is necessary a faith, *śraddhā*, in the power of the mind to lay its will on the state and action of the body, such as those have who heal disease by faith, will or mental action; but we must seek this control not only for this or any other limited use, but generally as a legitimate power of the inner and greater over the outer and lesser instrument. This faith is combated by our past habits of mind, by our actual normal experience of its comparative helplessness in our present imperfect system and by an opposing belief in the body and physical consciousness. For they too have a limiting *śraddhā* of their own which opposes the idea in the mind when it seeks to impose on the system the law of a higher yet unattained perfection. But as we persist and find this power giving evidence of

itself to our experience, the faith in the mind will be able to found itself more firmly and grow in vigour and the opposing faith in the body will change, admit what it first denied and not only accept in its habits the new yoke but itself call for this higher action. Finally we shall realise the truth that this being we are is or can become whatever it has the faith and will to be, for faith is only a will aiming at greater truth,—and cease to set limits to our possibility or deny the potential omnipotence of the Self in us, the divine Power working through the human instrument. That however, at least as a practical force, comes in at a later stage of high perfection.” (CWSA 24: 733)

3.

“Q: It was 1 a.m. at night when my brother in excruciating pain called me and asked if Sri Aurobindo could heal him. I took out some Prasad flowers that were with me and touched the affected part with them. And lo! the pain vanished and he began to recover. I want to know if you were aware of this and heard my prayer.

A: What happens in such cases is that when someone is accepted, the Mother sends out something of herself to him and this is with him wherever he goes and is always in connection with her being here. So when he does anything like what you did in this case with faith and bhakti, it reaches, through that emanation of herself which is with

VI—How Faith Acts on the Body

him, the Mother's consciousness inner or outer and the Force goes in return for the result." (CWSA 32: 239–240)

VII—Spiritual Power Has Cured Illness

1.

“If Yoga is a reality, if spirituality is anything better than a delusion, there must be such a thing as Yoga force or spiritual force.

It is evident that if spiritual force exists, it must be able to produce spiritual results—therefore there is no irrationality in the claim of those sadhaks who say that they feel the force of the Guru or the force of the Divine working in them and leading towards spiritual fulfilment and experience. ... if it be true that spiritual force is the original one and the others are derivative from it, then there is no irrationality in supposing that spiritual force can produce mental results, vital results, physical results. ... In a case of cure of illness, someone is lying ill for two days, weak, suffering from pains and fever; he takes no medicine but finally asks for cure from his Guru; the next morning he rises well, strong and energetic. He has at least some justification for thinking that a force has been used on him and put into him and that it was a spiritual power that acted. But in another case medicines may be used, while at the same time the invisible force may be called for to aid the material means, for it is a known fact that medicines may or may not succeed—there is no certitude. Here for the reason of an outside observer (one who is neither the user of the force nor the doctor nor the patient) it remains

uncertain whether the patient was cured by the medicines only or by the spiritual force with the medicines as an instrument. Either is possible, ... On the other hand it is possible for the doctor to have felt a force working in him and guiding him or he may see the patient improving with a rapidity which, according to medical science, is incredible. The patient may feel the force working in himself bringing health, energy, rapid cure. The user of the force may watch the results, see the symptoms he works on diminishing, those he did not work upon increasing till he does work on them and then immediately diminishing, the doctor working according to his unspoken suggestions, etc. etc. until the cure is done. (On the other hand he may see forces working against the cure and conclude that the spiritual force has to be contented with a withdrawal or an imperfect success.) In all that the doctor, the patient or the user of force is justified in believing that the cure is at least partly or even fundamentally due to the spiritual force.” (CWSA 29: 179–181)

2.

“But the Divine Force works here under conditions imposed by the Divine Will and Law; it has to take up an immense mass of conflicting forces, conditions, habits and movements of Nature and out of it arrive at the result of a higher consciousness on earth and a higher state. ...

Therefore conditions have to be satisfied, the work to be done has to be wrought out step by step.” (CWSA 29: 185)

“But even so there are plenty of people in the Asram who get rid of their ills by reliance on the Mother. If all cannot do it, what does that prove or disprove? It only proves that the Power does not work absolutely, miraculously, impossibly, but it works by certain given means and under conditions.” (CWSA 35: 501)

3.

“The invisible Force producing tangible results both inward and outward is the whole meaning of the Yogic consciousness. ... If we had not had thousands of experiences showing that the Power within could alter the mind ... control the conditions and functionings of the body, work as a concrete dynamic Force on other forces, ... etc. etc., we would not speak of it as we do. Moreover, it is not only in its results but in its movements that the Force is tangible and concrete. ... The conditions and limits under which Yoga or sadhana has to be worked out are not arbitrary or capricious; they arise from the nature of things. These including the will, receptivity, assent, self-opening and surrender of the sadhak have to be respected by the Yoga-force—unless it receives a sanction from the Supreme to override everything and get something done—but that sanction is sparingly given.

... Still the Yoga-force is always tangible and concrete in the way I have described and has tangible results. But it is invisible—not like a blow given or the rush of a motor car knocking somebody down which the physical senses can at once perceive.” (CWSA 29: 181–182)

4.

“Leave aside the question of Divine or undivine, no spiritual man who acts dynamically is limited to physical contact—the idea that physical contact through writing, speech, meeting is indispensable to the action of the spiritual force is self-contradictory, for then it would not be a spiritual force. The spirit is not limited by physical things or by the body. If you have the spiritual force, it can act on people thousands of miles away who do not know and never will know that you are acting on them or that they are being acted upon—they only feel that there is a force enabling them to do things and may very well suppose it is their own great energy and genius.” (CWSA 29: 184)

5.

“It is quite true that, left to yourself, you can do nothing; that is why you have to be in contact with the Force which is there to do for you what you cannot do for yourself. The only thing *you* have to do is to allow the Force to act and put yourself on its side, which means to have faith in it, to rely upon it, not to trouble and harass yourself, to remember it quietly, to call upon it quietly, to let it act

quietly. If you do that, all else will be done for you—not all at once, because there is much to clear away, but still it will be done steadily and more and more.” (CWSA 29: 188)

6.

“Always keep in touch with the Divine Force. The best thing for you is to do that simply and allow it to do its own work; wherever necessary, it will take hold of the inferior energies and purify them; at other times it will empty you of them and fill you with itself. But if you let your mind take the lead and discuss and decide what is to be done, you will lose touch with the Divine Force and the lower energies will begin to act for themselves and all go into confusion and a wrong movement.” (CWSA 29: 189)

7.

“To heal [illness] by the true force is obviously the best—provided the body is amenable. It has a consciousness of its own which must be fully enlightened before it gives a full response.” (CWSA 31: 578)

“One feels the Force only when one is in conscious contact with it.” (CWSA 29: 189)

“Remind yourself always that the Divine Force is there, that you have felt it and that, even if you seem to lose consciousness of it for a time or it seems something distant, still it is there and is sure to prevail. For those

whom the Force has touched and taken up, belong thenceforth to the Divine.” (CWSA 29: 189)

8.

“You refuse to speak to the Doctor and on the other hand your body is not yet able to receive the Forces in such a way as to cure it. When the body is not able to receive the Forces *unaided*, it is then that we send the Doctor and work through him—but here your mind comes in and refuses. So both means are stopped.” (CWSA 31: 581)

9.

“Where the illness becomes pronounced and chronic in the body, it is necessary often to call in the aid of physical treatment and that is then used as a support of the Force. X in his treatment does not rely on medicines alone, but uses them as an instrumentation for the Mother’s force.” (CWSA 31: 581)

10.

“As for curing you by the Force, the main obstacle is your own vital movements. All this egoistic insistence on your own ideas, claims, preferences—assertion of your own righteousness as against the wickedness of others, complaints, quarrels, disputes, rancours against those around you and the reactions they cause—have had this effect on your liver and stomach and nerves. If you give

up all that and live quietly and at peace with others, thinking less of yourself and others and more of the Divine, it would make things much easier and help to restore your health. Quietness of the mind in facing your illness is also necessary—agitation stops the action of the Force.” (CWSA 31: 579)

11.

“It is very good if one can get rid of illness entirely by faith and Yoga-power or the influx of the Divine Force. But very often this is not altogether possible, because the whole nature is not open or able to respond to the Force. The mind may have faith and respond, but the lower vital and the body may not follow. Or if the mind and vital are ready, the body may not respond, or may respond only partially, because it has the habit of replying to the forces which produce a particular illness and habit is a very obstinate force in the material part of the nature. In such cases the use of the physical means can be resorted to,—not as the main means, but as a help or material support to the action of the Force. Not strong and violent remedies, but those that are beneficial without disturbing the body.” (CWSA 31: 580)

VIII—How to Help a Sick Patient

1.

“The best way to help X is to assist her by your own example and atmosphere to get the right attitude. Instead of the sense that she is very ill, she should be encouraged to have a bright and confident feeling, open to receive strength and health from us, contributing by her own faith to a speedy recovery.” (CWSA 35: 706)

2.

“No need to give up your faith, for it is faith that gets things done and even makes the impossible possible. But it has to be kept when even there is no immediate result. In the physical care of a patient also there are adverse periods when the resistance is great and obstinate and there seems to be more swinging back than going forwards or a persistent recurrence of the trouble. Faith persisting and the call bring down after a time sufficient Force to overcome the obstacle.” (CWSA 35: 503)

3.

“If your husband is in a perilous period of his life and suffering from ill-health and you feel for him, the best thing for him is still that you should tranquillise yourself and call the Divine to his help to pass through. Even in the ordinary life disquietude and depression create an unhelpful

atmosphere for one who is ill or in difficulties. Once you are a sadhak, then whether for yourself or to help others for whom you still feel, the true spiritual attitude of reliance on the Divine Will and call for the help from above is always the best and most effective course.” (CWSA 31: 321)

4.

“It is also a pity that she has been told by the doctors that she is not going to live; even if it is true, such a thing should not be told unless in case of necessity ... for it takes away much of the power of resistance and diminishes what chances of cure and survival there were. X’s physical destiny has always been against her but this is a thing that can be cancelled if one can have sufficient faith and inner strength and openness and receive the spiritual force.” (CWSA 31: 558)

5.

*“Sweet Mother,
I ardently pray to You to pull me out of this condition of
bad health and make me progress integrally. You know
that my soul’s only aspiration is to love You and serve You.
Make me physically active in Your service.*

You have been and still remain a faithful servitor. Do not worry: if your body is no longer fit for physical work, take advantage of all the time at your disposal to develop your

VIII—How to Help a Sick Patient

inner consciousness and unite more and more consciously with the Divine.

Reading, meditation, contemplation, self-giving, in silence and concentration, to the Divine who is always present to hear you and guide you.

Blessings.” (CWM 17: 349)

IX—How Medicine Can Be Consistent with Faith

1.

“Q: 1) How can the use of medicines be consistent with faith?

2) When are medicines really necessary?

3) What is excessive use of medicines and what is sparing use?

A: The use of medicines is permissible, if it is necessitated by an insufficient responsiveness in the body or if the faith itself is of a mixed and insufficient character—i.e. if the mind or vital as well as the body feel uneasy in the presence of illness. It is consistent with faith when it is used only as a physical support to the action of the Force, not as a substitute.

To dose oneself with many medicines or to use strong medicines in ordinary cases or to use them when an opening to the Force or an exercise of the inner Will is sufficient, is excessive. For a system not accustomed to curing itself the use of mild medicines in just sufficient quantity can be quite effective and that is all that is needed.” (CWSA 35: 506–507)

“And it is the Grace alone that cures. The medicines only give a faith to the body. That is all.” (CWM 15: 149)

2.

“To medical knowledge and experience, add full faith in the Divine’s Grace and your healing capacity will have no limits.” (CWM 15: 155)

3.

“It is true that the faith cures more than the treatment. You might take Dr. X’s treatment and call for the Divine’s help.” (CWM 15: 157)

4.

“In every case, it is the Force that cures.

Medicines have little effect; it is the faith in medicines that cures.” (CWM 15: 158)

“Q: *Whatever the ordeal for the purification of my nature, I must pass through it with or without medical help.*

A: You are quite right. Stick to your faith and you will get cured.” (CWM 15: 158)

5.

“If one can cure by the Force as you have often done, it is the best—but if for some reason the body is not able to respond to the Force (e.g. owing to doubt, lassitude or discouragement or for inability to react against the disease), then the aid of medical treatment becomes necessary. It is not that the Force ceases to act and leaves

all to the medicines,—it will continue to act through the consciousness but take the support of the treatment so as to act directly on the resistance in the body, which responds more readily to physical means in its ordinary consciousness.” (CWSA 31: 581)

6.

“To separate yourself from the thing and call in the Mother’s force to cure it [is the Yogic method]—or else to use your own will force with faith in the power to heal, having the support of the Mother’s force behind you. If you cannot use either of these methods then you must rely on the action of the medicine.” (CWSA 31: 578)

“Yogic force is all right when one is in a Yogic condition and when it acts. But when it does not, medicine is handy.” (CWSA 31: 578)

7.

“Medicines are a *pis aller* that have to be used when something in the consciousness does not respond or responds superficially to the Force. Very often it is some part of the material consciousness that is unreceptive—at other times it is the subconscient which stands in the way even when the whole waking mind, life, physical consent to the liberating influence. If the subconscient also answers, then even a slight touch of the Force can not only

IX—How Medicine Can Be Consistent with Faith

cure the particular illness but make that form or kind of illness practically impossible hereafter.” (CWSA 31: 578)

X—Thoughts and Aphorisms on Illness, Medical Science and Faith

“401. Surgeons save and cure by cutting and maiming. Why not rather seek to discover Nature’s direct all-powerful remedies?

402. It should take long for self-cure to replace medicine, because of the fear, self-distrust and unnatural physical reliance on drugs which Medical Science has taught to our minds and bodies and made our second nature.

403. Medicine is necessary for our bodies in disease only because our bodies have learned the art of not getting well without medicines. Even so, one sees often that the moment Nature chooses for recovery is that in which the life is abandoned as hopeless by the doctors.

404. Distrust of the curative power within us was our physical fall from Paradise. Medical Science and a bad heredity are the two angels of God who stand at the gates to forbid our return and re-entry.

405. Medical Science to the human body is like a great Power which enfeebles a smaller State by its protection or like a benevolent robber who knocks his victim flat and

X—Thoughts and Aphorisms on Illness, Medical Science and Faith
riddles him with wounds in order that he may devote his life to healing and serving the shattered body.

406. Drugs often cure the body when they do not merely trouble or poison it, but only if their physical attack on the disease is supported by the force of the spirit; if that force can be made to work freely, drugs are superfluous." (CWSA 12: 477)

"254. So long as a cause has on its side one soul that is intangible in faith, it cannot perish.

255. Reason gives me no basis for this faith, thou murmurest. Fool! if it did, faith would not be needed or demanded of thee.

256. Faith in the heart is the obscure & often distorted reflection of a hidden knowledge. The believer is often more plagued by doubt than the most inveterate sceptic. He persists because there is something subconscious in him which knows. That tolerates both his blind faith & twilit doubts and drives towards the revelation of that which it knows.

257. The world thinks that it moves by the light of reason but it is really impelled by its faiths and instincts.

258. Reason adapts itself to the faith or argues out a justification of the instincts, but it receives the impulse subconsciously; therefore men think that they act rationally." (CWSA 12: 458)

"260. Until Wisdom comes to thee, use the reason for its God given purposes and faith and instinct for theirs. Why shouldst thou set thy members to war upon each other?" (CWSA 12: 458)

"381. For nearly forty years I believed them when they said I was weakly in constitution, suffered constantly from the smaller & the greater ailments & mistook this curse for a burden that Nature had laid upon me. When I renounced the aid of medicines, then they began to depart from me like disappointed parasites. Then only I understood what a mighty force was the natural health within me & how much mightier yet the Will & Faith exceeding mind which God meant to be the divine support of our life in this body." CWSA 12: 474)

"388. We laugh at the savage for his faith in the medicine man; but how are the civilised less superstitious who have faith in the doctors? The savage finds that when a certain incantation is repeated, he often recovers from a certain disease; he believes. The civilised patient finds that when he doses himself according to a certain prescription, he

X—Thoughts and Aphorisms on Illness, Medical Science and Faith
often recovers from a certain disease; he believes. Where
is the difference?

389. The north-country Indian herdsman, attacked by fever, sits in the chill stream of a river for an hour or more & rises up free & healthy. If the educated man did the same, he would perish, not because the same remedy in its nature kills one & cures another, but because our bodies have been fatally indoctrinated by the mind into false habits.

390. It is not the medicine that cures so much as the patient's faith in the doctor and the medicine. Both are a clumsy substitute for the natural faith in one's own self-power which they have themselves destroyed.

391. The healthiest ages of mankind were those in which there were the fewest material remedies." (CWSA 12: 475)

"392. The most robust and healthy race left on earth were the African savages; but how long can they so remain after their physical consciousness has been contaminated by the mental aberrations of the civilised?" (CWSA 12: 475–476)

"393. We ought to use the divine health in us to cure and prevent diseases; but Galen and Hippocrates & their tribe

X—Thoughts and Aphorisms on Illness, Medical Science and Faith
have given us instead an armoury of drugs and a barbarous
Latin hocus-pocus as our physical gospel.

394. Medical Science is well-meaning and its practitioners
often benevolent and not seldom self-sacrificing; but when
did the well-meaning of the ignorant save them from harm-
doing?

395. If all remedies were really and in themselves
efficacious and all medical theories sound, how would that
console us for our lost natural health and vitality? The
upas-tree is sound in all its parts, but it is still an upas-tree.

396. The spirit within us is the only all-efficient doctor and
submission of the body to it the one true panacea.

397. God within is infinite and self-fulfilling Will. Unappalled
by the fear of death, canst thou leave to Him, not as an
experiment, with a calm & entire faith thy ailments? Thou
shalt find in the end that He exceeds the skill of a million
doctors.

398. Health protected by twenty thousand precautions is
the gospel of the doctor; but it is not God's evangel for the
body, nor Nature's.

399. Man was once naturally healthy and could revert to
that primal condition if he were suffered; but Medical
Science pursues our body with an innumerable pack of

X—Thoughts and Aphorisms on Illness, Medical Science and Faith
drugs and assails the imagination with ravening hordes of
microbes.

400. I would rather die and have done with it than spend
life in defending myself against a phantasmal siege of
microbes. If that is to be barbarous [and] unenlightened, I
embrace gladly my Cimmerian darkness." (CWSA 12: 476)

"466. The sceptic mind doubts always because it cannot
understand, but the faith of the God-lover persists in
knowing although it cannot understand. Both are
necessary to our darkness, but there can be no doubt
which is the mightier. What I cannot understand now, I
shall some day master, but if I lose faith & love, I fall utterly
from the goal which God has set before me." (CWSA 12:
488)

XI—Do Not Allow the Physical Illnesses to Interfere with Your Sadhana

1.

“You ought not to allow the physical illnesses to interfere with your sadhana or affect your mind—these illnesses are nothing compared with what many others have had to pass through—you have some constipation, headaches, rheumatic pains, that ought not to be so difficult to bear. You have to separate yourself from the body consciousness and not allow yourself to be overpowered by it.” (CWSA 31: 549)

2.

“Illness must not be accepted as a means of transformation; it rather indicates certain difficulties encountered by the force of transformation especially in the vital and the body. But it is not necessary that these difficulties should be allowed to take this obscure form of illness. All illness should be rejected and all suggestions of illness; the Force should be called in to cure by the assent to health and the refusal of assent to the suggestions that bring or prolong its opposite.” (CWSA 31: 549)

3.

“Your theory of illness is rather a perilous creed—for illness is a thing to be eliminated, not accepted or enjoyed. There *is* something in the being that enjoys illness, it is possible

XI—Do Not Allow the Physical Illnesses to Interfere with Your
Sadhana

even to turn the pains of illness like any other pain into a form of pleasure; for pain and pleasure are both of them degradations of an original Ananda and can be reduced into the terms of each other or else sublimated into their original principle of Ananda. It is true also that one must be able to bear illness with calm, equanimity, endurance, even recognition of it, since it has come, as something that had to be passed through in the course of experience. But to accept and enjoy it means to help it to last and that will not do; ... All these things have to be eliminated and rejection is the first condition of their disappearance while acceptance has a contrary effect altogether." (CWSA 31: 565–566)

"All that is quite wrong.^[1] Illness is a wrong movement of the body and is no more to be cherished than a wrong movement of the mind or vital. Pain and illness have to be borne with calm, detachment and equanimity, but not cherished—the sooner one gets rid of them the better." (CWSA 31: 566)

[1] The correspondent wrote: "Some sadhaks hold the theory that illness is a thing to be cherished. It comes to us from the Divine who wants to test our faith by it. Illness makes us remember the Divine more often than otherwise. Therefore one should not even ask the Mother to throw it away from us. How do you regard this?"—Ed.

XI—Do Not Allow the Physical Illnesses to Interfere with Your
Sadhana

“It is good that you reject the sense of illness and allow no depression. Let there be no apprehension in the physical consciousness; with faith make it open to the Force.”
(CWSA 31: 568)

4.

“Whatever it may be—the power of the illness to prevent the sadhana ought not to exist. The Yogic consciousness and its activities must be there whether there is health or illness.” (CWSA 31: 549)

5.

“A body weak or sick can renew itself, recover its vitality—that happens to thousands of people. ... It is only if one is old beyond fifty-five or sixty that the renewal becomes difficult—even then health and strength can be kept or recovered enough to keep the body in a good condition.

I do not also quite catch what you mean about the inner being. If you mean by the *vikas* as the development of the sadhana, to recover health and strength is very necessary for that. The body is an instrument for the sadhana no less than the mind and vital, and it should be kept in a good condition as far as possible. Not to care for the body, thinking it is of no importance compared with the inner state, is not the rule of this Yoga.” (CWSA 31: 558)

XII—Earlier the Ashram Was Free from Illness

1.

“What you say is also true. Not to be conscious about the body, not to be always thinking of it, just to say to one’s illness ‘Nonsense’ and go about one’s business is often very effective. When we first had the Asram there was no Doctor, no dispensary, no medicines, people hardly got ill and, if any did, he simply got well again. If at any time somebody got dysentery, he just swallowed a lot of rice and whey and got well again. If he had fever he lay in bed a day or two and got up again. There was no serious illness and no lasting illness. Now with doctors and dispensaries and cupboards full of medicines illnesses gambol about like tigers in a jungle. But in those days people had a faith in the mind and even one might say in the body, ‘What is illness going to do to me here’ and that attitude imposed its own result.” (CWSA 35: 785)

2.

“Formerly when there were only thirty or forty sadhaks and there was a universal faith, then without medicines or doctors the Asram was free from illness except for passing colic etc. cured in a day or merely brief fevers. If one had fever, one simply lay down for a day or two and got up well. Now, since the numbers increased and the struggle with old Nature is on the material plane, illness has

increased in frequency and violence. But if there were the same solid mass of living faith, the old relative immunity might still return. But absolute immunity can be only by sadhana." 5 October 1936 (CWSA 35: 790–791)

3.

"Q: If increase in the number of inmates stands in the way, if doctors and medicines shake the faith, well, it is very easy to solve both the problems, isn't it?"

A: Increase of numbers brought in all sorts of influences that were not there in the smaller circle before. Doctors did not matter so long as faith was the main thing and a little treatment the help. But when faith went, illness increased and the doctor became not merely useful but indispensable. There was also the third cause, the descent into the physical consciousness with all its doubt, obscurity and resistance. To eliminate all that is no longer possible." (CWSA 35: 787)

4.

"There are sadhus, you know, who accept the conditions of a dirty life through saintliness. They never wash themselves, they have nothing about them that hygiene demands. They live in a truly dirty condition—and they are free from all illness. Probably because they have faith and they do so purposely. Their spirit is magnificent.... I am

speaking of sincere people and not those who pretend. They have faith. They do not think of their body, they think of the life of their soul. They have no illness. There are some who come to a state in which an arm or a leg or any part of the body has become completely stiff due to their ascetic posture. They cannot move any more; anybody else would die under such conditions; they continue to live because they have faith and they do it purposely, because it is a thing they have imposed on themselves.” (CWM 5: 170)

5.

“In my own experience I have found that those who possessed well developed and well organised ‘psychic’ and occult powers were healthy and well poised; indeed they said that in ill health or physical weakness they could do nothing—it impaired their power.” (CWSA 28: 578)

XIII—Wrong Ideas About How Illness Is Acquired in Yoga

1.

"... but I find it difficult to believe that illness and deterioration of the body is the natural and general result of the practice of Yoga or that that practice is the cause of an inevitable breakdown of health or of the final illnesses which bring about their departure from the body. On what ground are we to suppose or how can it be proved that while non-Yogis suffer from ill health and die because of the disorders of Nature, Yogis die of their Yoga? Unless a direct connection between their death and their practice of Yoga can be proved—and this could be proved with certainty only in particular cases and even then not with an absolute certainty—there is no sufficient reason to believe in such a difference. It is more rational to conclude that both Yogis and non-Yogis fall ill and die from natural causes and by the same dispensation of Nature; one might even advance the view, since they have the Yoga Shakti at their disposal if they choose to use it, that the Yogi falls ill and dies not because of but in spite of his Yoga." (CWSA 31: 550–551)

2.

"Illness does not rise up by the descent of the Force, nor hereditary taint nor madness. They come up of

XIII—Wrong Ideas About How Illness Is Acquired in Yoga

themselves, as in X's case who never had even the smallest grain of a descent or a Force anywhere. It is only after he went off his centre, that we are putting Force (not as a descent, but as an agent) to keep him as straight and as sound as possible." (CWSA 31: 552)

"A descent [*of the force*] cannot possibly produce nausea and vomiting etc. There can, if one pulls down too much force, be produced a headache or giddiness; both of these go if one keeps quiet a little, ceases pulling and assimilates. A descent cannot produce blood pressure, madness or apoplexy or heart failure or any other illness." (CWSA 31: 552–553)

"Whatever force is sent is for cure. Increase of illness or physical suffering is not the result of the force." (CWSA 31: 553)

XIV—Auto-Suggestions for Restoring Good Health Are Really Faith in a Mental Form

1.

“These auto-suggestions [*of being restored to good health*]*—it is really faith in a mental form—act both on the subliminal and the subconscious. In the subliminal they set in action the powers of the inner being, its occult power to make thought, will or simple conscious force effective on the body—in the subconscious they silence or block the suggestions of death and illness (expressed or unexpressed) that prevent the return of health. They help also to combat the same things (adverse suggestions) in the mind, vital, body consciousness. Where all this is completely done or with some completeness, the effects can be very remarkable.*” (CWSA 31: 559)

2.

“It is the final discovery that one makes that in this world everything depends upon consciousness and its movements, even the things that seem not to do so. In these matters of illness, vital trouble etc., that resolves itself into suggestion (hostile) and auto-suggestion. Coue, [*French doctor who popularized a system of psychotherapy based on auto-suggestion*] though he did not know these things, had the brilliant intuition of adopting the contrary method of curative auto-suggestion and giving it a

XIV—Auto-Suggestions for Restoring Good Health Are Really Faith in a Mental Form

thorough and systematic application. Here it does not succeed so well because the anti-Coue spirit is very strong in many, the habit of entertaining hostile suggestions or this openness to them. Yet in Yoga also faith and right auto-suggestion are of great use until the point comes when no suggestion is necessary because the Truth-consciousness acts automatically and produces its natural results." (CWSA 31: 559–560)

3.

"The suggestions that create illness or unhealthy conditions of the physical being come usually through the subconscious—for a great part of the physical being, the most material part, is subconscious, i.e. to say, it has an obscure consciousness of its own but so obscure and shut up in itself that the mind does not know its movements or what is going on there. But all the same it is a consciousness and can receive suggestions from Forces outside, just as the mind and vital do. If it were not so, there would not be any possibility of opening it to the Force and the Force curing it; for without this consciousness in it it would not be able to respond. In Europe and America there are many people now who recognise this fact and treat their illnesses by making conscious mental suggestions to the body which counteract the obscure secret suggestions of illness in the subconscious. There was a famous Doctor in France who cured thousands of people

XIV—Auto-Suggestions for Restoring Good Health Are Really Faith
in a Mental Form

by making them persistently put such counter-suggestions upon the body. That proves that illness has not a purely material cause, but is due to a disturbance of the secret consciousness in the body.

To bear quietly and in silence does help to release from the reaction of grief, if one makes the vital quiet; but it should be at the same time surrendered to the Mother. For the Mother to know from within is not enough; there must be this laying before her and giving up to her so that the reaction may disappear." (CWSA 31: 560)

4.

"It is certainly better not to dwell on the difficulties or give them too much voice, because, our experience shows us, to do so helps to make them return like a recurring decimal. The Coue formula is too crude and simple to be entirely true in principle, but it has a great practical force, and behind it there is a very great truth in a world and a consciousness governed by the Overmind Maya: it is this, that what we affirm strongly gets power to persist in the consciousness and experience and calls circumstances to its support, what we deny and reject and refuse to support by the power of the Word, tends, after a time and some resistance, to lose force in the consciousness and the circumstances and movements that support it tend also to recur less often and finally disappear. It is fundamentally the principle of the mantra. On that ground I approve of

XIV—Auto-Suggestions for Restoring Good Health Are Really Faith
in a Mental Form

your resolution not to give any more the *avalambana* of the written word to these things. A constant affirmation from within on the other side—of that which is to be realised—brings always in the end a response from above.” (CWSA 31:561)

5.

“These things [*cures by faith-healing and psychotherapy*] are a matter of evidence and the evidence for Coue’s success is overwhelming. There have also been many great healers (*guérisseurs*) all over the world whose successes are well-attested. Faith healing and psychotherapy are also facts.” (CWSA 31: 561)

XV—How to Enable the Divine to Give Back the Health We Have Lost

1.

“We cannot counteract the harm done by mental faith in the need for drugs by any external measures. Only by escaping from the mental prison and emerging consciously into the light of the spirit, by a conscious union with the Divine, can we enable Him to give back to us the balance and health we have lost.

The supramental transformation is the only true remedy.” (CWM 10: 325)

2.

“As always Sri Aurobindo’s words are prophetic. For only when humanity is cured of its mental aberrations will it be able to manifest the supramental consciousness and recover the natural health which the mind has lost for it.” (CWM 10: 323)

3.

“The sovereignty of mind has made humanity the slave of doctors and their remedies. And the result is that illnesses are increasing in number and seriousness.

The only true salvation for men is to escape from mental domination by opening to the Divine Influence

XV—How to Enable the Divine to Give Back the Health We Have
Lost

which they will obtain through a total surrender.” (CWM
10: 324)

4.

“Sri Aurobindo gives us a striking description of the
nightmare in which we live, in order to awaken within us
an unwearying aspiration towards the salvation that comes
from the true consciousness and an exclusive faith in the
Divine’s omnipotence.” (CWM 10: 326)

XVI—Good Health

1.

“If strength and health are requested as being necessary for the sadhana and the development of the perfection of the instrument it is all right.” (CWSA 32: 315)

2.

“For the spiritual life to give and not to demand is the rule. The sadhak however can ask for the Divine Force to aid him in keeping his health or recovering it if he does that as part of his sadhana so that his body may be able and fit for the spiritual life and a capable instrument for the Divine Work.” (CWSA 29: 9)

“There is nothing wrong in taking care of the body in regard to health and, if the liver has gone wrong, the instinct to refuse too sweet or greasy or heavy foods is a right instinct.” (CWSA 31: 557)

3.

“All the circumstances of life are arranged to teach us that, beyond mind, faith in the Divine Grace gives us the strength to go through all trials, to overcome all weaknesses and find the contact with the Divine Consciousness which gives us not only peace and joy but also physical balance and good health.” (CWM 10: 320)

4.

"The experience of a concrete presence of the Mother in the photograph and the immediate effect on the health are things of the subtle physical acting on the physical mind and body—such things can happen only when the physical consciousness has begun to open—that is why I said it was a sign. Of course the full effects of the spiritual experiences can only come when the whole consciousness is entirely open and receives and responds to them." (CWSA 32: 288)

5.

"In the ordinary condition of the body if you oblige the body to do too much work, it can do with the support of vital force. But as soon as the work is done, the vital force withdraws and then the body feels fatigue. If this is done too much and for too long a time, there may be a breakdown of health and strength under the overstrain. Rest is then needed for recovery.

If however the mind and the vital get the habit of opening to the Mother's Force, they are then supported by the Force and may even be fully filled with it—the Force does the work and the body feels no strain or fatigue before or after." (CWSA 32: 257–258)

6.

"The body is sufficiently plastic till twenty-five. Later one must introduce more scientific methods, like physical culture; and if that is done wisely and methodically, one

can obtain wonderful results. But always, behind it, there must be a will, that is very important; a kind of tenacious aspiration, a knowledge, or even a faith that one is not necessarily tied down by atavism [ancient or ancestral].” (CWM 8: 25)

7.

“The Hatha yogic method is to bring an immense vital force into the body and by this and by certain processes keep it strong and in good health and a capable instrument.” (CWSA 28: 306)

8.

“Tell him it is not safe to do Pranayam without guidance by one who is expert in Rajayoga or Hathayoga. Pranayam is not a part of the sadhana here.” (CWSA 29: 440)

“Pranayam is safe only if one knows how to do it and is on guard against its possible dangers: (1) danger to health by mistakes in the method, (2) rising of the vital forces, especially lust, egoism and wrongly directed strength and force, (3) the awakening of concealed sanskaras of the physical nature or latent karma from past lives.” (CWSA 29: 439–440)

9.

“The rule to be followed is that laid down by the Gita which says that ‘Yoga is not for one who eats too much or who

does not eat'; a moderate use of food sufficient for the maintenance and health and strength of the body." (CWSA 28: 575576)

10.

"The food given from the Dining Room has the Mother's force behind it. It contains everything that is necessary to keep you in good health to do the sadhana. Keep that attitude and eat. Everything will go well." (CWSA 35: 771)

11.

"The ordinary period of sleep most people give themselves is 8 hours. In bad health (I am not speaking of acute illness) it can extend to 9. 12 hours is excessive unless one is seriously ill or recovering from illness or else has underslept for a long time and the body is making up arrears of needed sleep." (CWSA 31: 440)

"To sleep without a burdened stomach is obviously more healthy, both psychologically and physically." (CWSA 31: 443)

12.

"But precisely what you have got to do is to 'shut them [obscure vital movement, wrong thoughts] out', to reject, refuse to keep them, refuse to have them. It is precisely to see in another way, to see in the true way, that the Force is pressing on you. It would indeed be a great blessing if

you could forget these other wrong things altogether. Again, why do you want to keep and change the 'wrong things' as you yourself call them? If you have an illness, do you want to keep and change the pains, the sickness and all the rest of it? It is to throw out the illness that you want, for the body to forget it, not to keep any impression of it, to lose even the possibility of having it again, to live and feel in quite another way, the way of health. It is just the same here." (CWSA 31: 144)

"Green light can signify various things according to the context—... in the vital physical it signifies a force of health." (CWSA 30: 132)

13.

"This over-sensitive brooding on past blows to the vital is an unhealthy sensitiveness. What is past ought not to have a hold like that but be allowed to fade out." (CWSA 31: 384)

14.

"If you have fear or apprehension of illness in your vital, that is the first thing to be thrown away, as it helps the illnesses to come in." (CWSA 31: 568)

15.

"To let the memory or imagination dwell on things that excite the sex-desire is unhealthy for the sadhana and an

obstacle to the development of the Yogic consciousness. Discourage these imaginations and memories when they come.” (CWSA 31: 523)

16.

“The excitations etc. that accompany it [masturbation] build up nothing; their tendency is to disintegrate. Often the result of this habit is to destroy the health and bring in undermining illnesses—it always does so when there is unrestrained indulgence.” (CWSA 31: 532)

17.

“It would be difficult for anyone suffering from nervous debility to follow Yogic processes; the recovery of health would be a necessary preliminary. It would be especially dangerous in Sri Aurobindo’s path of Yoga.” (CWSA 35: 530)

XVII—The Absolute Immunity from Illness

1.

“The absolute immunity [from illness] can only come with the supramental change. For below the supramental it is the result of an action of a Force among many forces and can be disturbed by a disruption of the equilibrium established—in the supramental it is a law of the nature; in a supramentalised body immunity from illness would be automatic, inherent in its new nature.

There is a difference between Yogic Force on the mental and inferior planes and Supramental Nature. What is acquired and held by the Yoga Force in the mind and body consciousness is in the supramental inherent and exists not by achievement but by nature—it is self-existent and absolute.” (CWSA 31: 564)

2.

“The body can be immune [from illness] only when it is open to the higher consciousness and the latter can descend into it. Till then what he writes is the remedy—if he can also call in the force to throw out the illness, that is the most powerful help possible.” (CWSA 31: 550)

“It is only by the conquest of the material nature that illness can cease altogether to come.” (CWSA 31: 550)

3.

"In much the same way as Coue's suggestion system cured most of his patients, [*so an ordinary doctor would cure his patients*] only by a physical instead of a mental means. The body consciousness responds to the suggestion or the medicine and one gets cured for the time being or it doesn't respond and there is no cure. How is it that the same medicine for the same illness succeeds with one man and not with another or succeeds at one time with a man and afterwards doesn't succeed at all? Absolute cure of an illness so that it cannot return again depends on clearing the mind, the vital and the body consciousness and the subconscious of the psychological response to the force bringing the illness. Sometimes this is done by a sort of order from above (when the consciousness is ready, but it cannot always be done like that). The complete immunity from all illness for which our Yoga tries can only come by a total and permanent enlightenment of the below from above resulting in the removal of the psychological roots of ill health—it cannot be done otherwise." (CWSA 31: 559)

4.

"As for the question about the illness, perfection in the physical plane is indeed part of the ideal of the Yoga, but it is the last item and, so long as the fundamental change has not been made in the material consciousness to which the body belongs, one may have a certain perfection on

XVII—The Absolute Immunity from Illness

other planes without having immunity in the body.” (CWSA 31: 565)

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