

COURAGE in SADHANA

Second Edition



A COMPILATION FROM THE WORKS OF
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Compiled by Jamshed M Mavalwalla

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Sri Aurobindo and the Mother**



Sri Aurobindo Society

AUROPUBLICATIONS

POWERFUL THOUGHTS, INSPIRING VISION

COURAGE in SADHANA

Second Edition

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The idea for the comprehensive compilation: Vijay bhai

Compiler: Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

Proofreading: Archana Udaykumar and Puja Narula

Cover: Kavita Dutta and Uttam Mondal

E-book: Vivechana Saraf, Shivakumar and Uttam Mondal

Help in preparing the second edition: Uttam Mondal

The photograph of the flower on the cover has been given the spiritual significance 'Courage' by the Mother. The botanical name of the flower is *Calotropis gigantean*. (*The Spiritual Significance of Flowers*, Part I, page 140)

"Courage: bold, it faces all dangers." (CWM 14: 169)

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

In the series of comprehensive compilations, we now plan to bring out compilations on the virtues and qualities, as prescribed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, necessary for doing Yoga. The first book in this series is *COURAGE in SADHANA*.

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 the virtue of courage. 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 been provided by the compiler to bring clarity to the selected topic.

Jamshed M. Mavalwalla

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I—What Is Courage?

1. "... courage, magnanimity, justice, truth, the four elements of strength; and mercy, charity, love, beneficence, the four elements of sweetness, making that harmony of perfect sweetness & strength which is perfect character, to a mind, pure of passion and disturbance and prepared against the delusions of sense and the limitations of intellect, such a mind as is alone capable of self-knowledge." (CWSA 17: 280)

2. "Courage: bold, it faces all dangers." (CWM 14: 169)

3. "In true courage there is no impatience and no rashness." (CWM 14: 170)

4. "Integral courage: whatever the domain, whatever the danger, the attitude remains the same—calm and assured." (CWM 14: 169)

5. "A strong vital is one that is full of life-force, has ambition, courage, great energy, a force for action or for creation, a large expansive movement whether for generosity in giving or for possession and lead and domination, a power to fulfil and materialise—many other forms of vital strength there are also. It is often difficult for

such a vital to surrender itself because of this sense of its own powers—but if it can do so, it becomes an admirable instrument for the Divine Work.” (CWSA 28: 196)

6. “Courage is a sign of the soul’s nobility.

But courage must be calm and master of itself, generous and benevolent.” (CWM 14: 169)

7. “Take someone, for example, who wants to have the experience of nobility—a nobility which makes it impossible for you to act like an ordinary person, which infuses into you a bravery, a courage which may almost be taken for rashness because the attitude, the experience demands that you face danger without showing the least fear.” (CWM 4: 150)

8. “But the central truth of Vedanta enfolds in a single phrase all the highest ethics of the world. Courage, magnanimity, purity, justice, charity, mercy, beneficence, loving kindness, forgiveness, tolerance, all the highest demands that the most exalted ethical teacher can make on humanity are contained in that single doctrine; and find in it their one adequate philosophical justification and sole natural basis.” (CWSA 17: 279)

9. “Sahasam is the active courage and daring which shrinks from no enterprise however difficult or

perilous and cannot be dismayed or depressed either by the strength or the success of the opposing forces.” (CWSA 10: 9)

10. “The moral courage and endurance are often much more difficult to get than the material courage and endurance.” (CWM 14: 170)

11. “The thirst of knowledge, the self-devotion, the purity, the renunciation of the Brahmin,—the courage, ardour, honour, nobility, chivalry, patriotism of the Kshatriya,—the beneficence, skill, industry, generous enterprise and large open-handedness of the Vaishya,—the self-effacement and loving service of the Shudra,—these are the qualities of the Aryan. They constitute the moral temper we desire in our young men, in the whole nation. But how can we get them if we do not give opportunities to the young to train themselves in the Aryan tradition, to form by the practice and familiarity of childhood and boyhood the stuff of which their adult lives must be made?” (CWSA 1: 391)

12. “The lion indicates force and courage, strength and power. The lower vital is not lion like.” (CWSA 30: 167)

13. “The lion means vital force, strength, courage—here full of the light, illumined by the spiritual consciousness.” (CWSA 30: 167)

14. “Now, there is an intrepidity which comes from unconsciousness and ignorance. Children, for example, who do not know about dangers, you see, do things they would not do if they had the knowledge of this danger. This means that their intrepidity is an ignorant one. But true courage is courage with the full knowledge of the thing, that is, it knows all the possibilities and is ready to face everything without exception.” (CWM 7: 31)

15. “Once I was asked a question, a psychological question. It was put to me by a man who used to deal in wild animals. He had a menagerie, and he used to buy wild animals everywhere, in all countries where they are caught, in order to sell them again on the European market. He was an Austrian, I think. He had come to Paris, and he said to me, ‘I have to deal with two kinds of tamers. I would like to know very much which of the two is more courageous. There are those who love animals very much, they love them so much that they enter the cage without the least idea that it could prove dangerous, as a friend enters a friend’s house, and they make them work, teach them how to do things, make them work without the slightest fear. I knew some who did not even have a whip in their hands; they went in and spoke with such friendliness to their animals that all went off well. This did not prevent their being eaten up one day. But still—this is one kind. The other sort are those who are so afraid before

entering, that they tremble, you know, they become sick from that, usually. But they make an effort, they make a considerable moral effort, and without showing any fear they enter and make the animals work.'

Then he told me, 'I have heard two opinions: some say that it is much more courageous to overcome fear than not to have any fear.... Here's the problem. So which of the two is truly courageous?'

There is perhaps a third kind, which is truly courageous, still more courageous than either of the two. It is the one who is perfectly aware of the danger, who knows very well that one can't trust these animals. The day they are in a particularly excited state they can very well jump on you treacherously. But that's all the same to them. They go there for the joy of the work to be done, without questioning whether there will be an accident or not and in full quietude of mind, with all the necessary force and required consciousness in the body. This indeed was the case of that man himself. He had so terrific a will that without a whip, simply by the persistence of his will, he made them do all that he wanted. But he knew very well that it was a dangerous profession. He had no illusions about it. He told me that he had learnt this work with a cat—a cat!" (CWM 7: 26–27)

[In the story on Virtue, the Mother describes Courage as follows:]

16. “Near to her [Sincerity], like two faithful guardians, stood Humility, at once respectful and proud, and Courage, lofty-browed, clear eyed, his lips firm and smiling, with a calm and resolute air.

Close beside Courage, her hand in his, stood a woman, completely veiled, of whom nothing could be seen but her searching eyes, shining through her veils. It was Prudence.” (CWM 2: 5–6)

II—What Courage in Yoga Means

1. “I remember that once we spoke of courage as one of the perfections; I remember having written it down once in a list. But this courage means having a taste for the supreme adventure. And this taste for supreme adventure is aspiration—an aspiration which takes hold of you completely and flings you, without calculation and without reserve and without a possibility of withdrawal, into the great adventure of the divine discovery, the great adventure of the divine meeting, the yet greater adventure of the divine Realisation; you throw yourself into the adventure without looking back and without asking for a single minute, ‘What’s going to happen?’ For if you ask what is going to happen, you never start, you always remain stuck there, rooted to the spot, afraid to lose something, to lose your balance.

That’s why I speak of courage—but really it is aspiration. They go together. A real aspiration is something full of courage.” (CWM 8: 40–41)

2. “So here’s my proposal: we put surrender first, at the top of the list, that is, we accept what Sri Aurobindo has said—that to do the integral yoga one must first resolve to surrender entirely to the Divine, there is no other way, this is *the* way. But after that one must have the five

psychological virtues, five psychological perfections, and we say that these perfections are:

Sincerity or Transparency

Faith or Trust (Trust in the Divine, naturally)

Devotion or Gratitude

Courage or Aspiration

Endurance or Perseverance.” (CWM 8: 42)

3. “There is a courage which can make you cross rivers and another that enables you to take the right path; but even more courage is needed to stay on the right path than to enter it.

Listen to the parable of the hen and her chicks:

Siddhartha, the Blessed One, used to instruct his disciples to do their best and then to trust that the best would bear its fruit.

‘Just as,’ he said, ‘a hen lays eggs and broods on them and never thinks of fretting: ‘Will my little chicks be able to break out of their shells with their beaks and see the light of day?’ you too should have no fear: if you are persistent in the Noble Path, you also will come to the light.’

And this is true courage: to walk the straight path, to brave storm, darkness and suffering and to persevere, moving ever forward, in spite of everything, towards the light.” (CWM 2: 186)

4. “For truth is the foundation of real spirituality and courage is its soul. *Tasyai satyam āyatanam.*” (CWSA 19: 45)

5. “Love is the nature of the lover, courage the nature of the warrior; love and courage are impersonal and universal forces or formulations of the cosmic Force, they are the spirit’s powers of its universal being and nature.” (CWSA 22: 1029)

6. “True courage, in its deepest sense, is to be able to face everything, everything in life, from the smallest to the greatest things, from material things to those of the spirit, without a shudder, without physically... without the heart beginning to beat faster, without the nerves trembling or the slightest emotion in any part of the being. Face everything with a constant consciousness of the divine Presence, with a total self-giving to the Divine, and the whole being unified in this will; then one can go forward in life, can face anything whatever. I say, without a shudder, without a vibration; this, you know, is the result of a long effort, unless one is born with a special grace, born like that. But this indeed is still more rare.” (CWM 7: 31)

7. “The chaturvarnya in guna may be called Virya. It is the qualities of the four varnas in character

II—What Courage in Yoga Means

[Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra]. The perfect man has all the four in him, although one usually predominates and gives the character its general type. ...

There should also be the qualities of the Kshatriya, the qualities of the man of action or the fighter. The first of these is courage and it is of two kinds—Abhaya or passive courage which is alarmed by no danger and shrinks from no peril that offers itself and from no misfortune or suffering. The second is Sahasa or active courage, that is to say, the daring to undertake any enterprise however difficult or apparently impossible and carry it through in spite of all dangers, suffering, failures, obstacles and oppositions. For this, two other things are necessary. [First,] a tendency of the nature to insist on the battle and victory and effort and triumph, i.e. Yasholipsa. Secondly, there must be a strong self-confidence and a high idea of the power that is in one's self. This is Atma Shakti or Atma Slagha." (CWSA 11: 1469)

III—What Is Not Courage?

1. “Never mistake rashness for courage, nor indifference for patience.” (CWM 14: 170)

2. “Your being does want to be free and at peace and happy in the light—it is this Falsehood seizing hold of your external mind that makes you want to be more dark and miserable and revolted and hate yourself and not to live. Such feelings, such a perverted will is entirely opposed to the normal feelings of the nature and cannot be ‘true’ and right. There is nobody who asks you to pretend—what we ask you is to reject false perversions and wrong feelings and ignorance and not to go on supporting them as they want you to do. It is not courage and nobility to accept these things as the law of your nature, nor is it meanness and cowardice to aspire to a higher Truth and try to act according to it and make that the law of your nature.” (CWSA 31: 719)

3. “HIS IS surely a bounded soul who has never felt the brooding wings of a Fate overshadow the world, never looked beyond the circle of persons, collectivities and forces, never been conscious of the still thought or the assured movement of a Presence in things determining their march. On the other hand it is the sign of a defect in the thought or a void of courage and clearness in the

III—What Is Not Courage?

temperament to be overwhelmed by Fate or hidden Presence and reduced to a discouraged acquiescence,—as if the Power in things nullified or rendered superfluous and abortive the same Power in myself. Fate and free-will are only two movements of one indivisible energy. My will is the first instrument of my Fate, Fate a Will that manifests itself in the irresistible subconscious intention of the world.”
(CWSA 13: 158)

IV—Courage, the First Necessity of the Sadhaka

1. “Courage and unalterable confidence are the first necessity of the Sadhaka.” (CWSA 36: 340)

2. “The first qualities needed are boldness, courage and perseverance.” (CWM 16: 430)

3. “Certainly, this is no short cut or easy sadhana. It requires a colossal faith, an absolute courage and above all an unflinching patience.” (CWSA 23: 46)

4. “Throw aside this weakness. The Mother’s help is there—keep yourself quiet and calm and face the difficulties with the courage a sadhak must have when seeking the Divine.” (CWSA 32: 294)

5. “Courage and love are the only indispensable virtues; even if all the others are eclipsed or fall asleep, these two will save the soul alive.” (CWSA 12: 455)

6. “The surest way towards this integral fulfilment is to find the Master of the secret who dwells within us, open ourselves constantly to the divine Power which is also the divine Wisdom and Love and trust to it to effect the conversion.... It is difficult afterwards because the faith,

the surrender, the courage requisite in this path are not easy to the ego-clouded soul.” (CWSA 23: 63–64)

7. “When you have started, you must go to the very end. Sometimes, you see, to people who come to me with enthusiasm I say, ‘Think a little, it is not an easy path, you will need time, you will need patience. You will need much endurance, much perseverance and courage and an untiring goodwill. Look and see if you are capable of having all this, and then start. But once you have started, it is finished, there is no going back any more; you must go to the very end.’

Sometimes I tell them, I tell them that I give them a few days or a few months. There are some to whom I have given a few years for reflection. I told them, ‘Look well, be quite sure.’ But once they come and say, ‘Now I have decided, I want to start’, it is good. Now, one must go on to the very end, whatever the cost; even if it is very difficult, one has to go to the very end.” (CWM 6: 441)

8. “The vision of the Light and the vision of the Lord in the form of Jagannath are both of them indications that he has the capacity for Yoga experience and that there is a call of the Divine on his inner being. But capacity is not enough; there must be also the will to seek after the Divine and courage and persistence in following the path. Fear is the first thing that must be thrown away and, secondly, the

inertia of the outer being which has prevented him from responding to the call.” (CWSA 29: 35–36)

9. *“At times I feel a kind of peculiar fear as if I am going to lose my brain (especially at night when I go to bed).*

You can reply to him that if he has fears of this kind, it would be better not to try the sadhana. It is a difficult Yoga and faith, a steady and quiet will, courage and strength are necessary if one is to follow it.” (CWSA 35: 546)

10. “Through four soul-stages a man must pass before he can be perfect; first, as a Sudra, by service and obedience to tame the brute in his being; then, as a Vaishya to satisfy within the law of morality the lower man in him and evolve the higher man by getting the first taste of delight in well-doing to others than himself and his; then, as the Kshatriya, to be trained in those first qualities without which the pursuit of the Eternal is impossible, courage, strength, unconquerable tenacity and self-devotion to a great task; last, as the Brahmin, so to purify body & mind and nature that he may see the Eternal reflected in himself as in an unsoiled mirror. Having once seen God, man can have no farther object in life than to reach and possess Him. Now the Karmayogin is a soul that

is already firmly established in the Kshatriya stage and is rising from it through an easily-attained Brahminhood straight & swift to God. If he loses hold of his courage & heroism, he loses his footing on the very standing ground from which he is to heighten himself in his spiritual stature until his hand can reach up to and touch the Eternal. Let his footing be lost, & what can he do but fall?" (CWSA 17: 195–196)

11. "Emotion should only give a colour to the man's swabhava or temperament. He should be habitually full of feelings of love, courage, honour, true ambition, self-reliance etc., but he should not act from any individual impulse of however noble a character. He should act in obedience to the impulse from the Will in direct communication with the Purusha in the Vijnana, understanding with the Buddhi why the Will acts in that particular way and colouring the act with the emotion appropriate to his Swabhava." (CWSA 11: 1387)

12. "We may best compare the systems by taking each of Patanjali's steps separately and seeing how the three kinds of Rajayogins will deal with them. In the present article we shall deal with Patanjali. The first step is the preparation of the moral nature, the discipline of the heart, its perfection in the four great qualities of love, purity, courage and calm, without which siddhi in the

Rajayoga is impossible. Patanjali prescribes the practice of the five yamas or regulating moral exercises, truth, justice and honesty, harmlessness, chastity and refusal of ownership, and the five niyamas or regulating moral habits, cleanliness and purity, contentment, austerity, meditation on Scripture, worship and devotion to God.” (CWSA 1: 509)

13. “Spirituality is indeed the master-key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinite is native to it. ... Then with that calm audacity of her intuition which knew no fear or littleness and shrank from no act whether of spiritual or intellectual, ethical or vital courage, she declared that there was none of these things which man could not attain if he trained his will and knowledge; he could conquer these ranges of mind, become the spirit, become a god, become one with God, become the ineffable Brahman.” (CWSA 20: 6–7)

V—Why Courage Is the First Necessity in the Sadhana

1. “Much has to be done before they [calm and peace] can be established or persistently effective, but that they should come at this stage is a clear proof of capacity to receive. It must be remembered however that the Yoga is not easy and cannot be done without the rising of many obstacles and much lapse of time—so if you take it up it must be with a firm resolve to carry it through to the end with a whole-hearted sincerity, faith, patience and courage.” (CWSA 30: 455) (CWSA 35: 547)

2. “War and strife themselves have been schools of heroism; they have preserved the heroic in man, they have created the *kṣatriyāstyaktajīvitāḥ* of the Sanskrit epic phrase, the men of power and courage who have abandoned their bodily life for a cause; for without heroism man cannot grow into the Godhead; courage, energy and strength are among the very first principles of the divine nature in action.” (CWSA 25: 166)

3. “One who has not the courage to face patiently and firmly life and its difficulties will never be able to go through the still greater inner difficulties of the sadhana. The very first lesson in this Yoga is to face life and its trials

with a quiet mind, a firm courage and an entire reliance on the Divine Shakti.” (CWSA 29: 111)

4. “Progress may be slow, falls may be frequent, but if a courageous will is maintained one is sure to triumph some day and see all difficulties melt and vanish before the radiant consciousness of truth.” (CWM 12: 7)

5. “But since no human system has this endless receptivity and unfailing capacity, the supramental Yoga can succeed only if the Divine Force as it descends increases the personal power and equates the strength that receives with the Force that enters from above to work in the nature. This is only possible if there is on our part a progressive surrender of the being into the hands of the Divine; there must be a complete and never failing assent, a courageous willingness to let the Divine Power do with us whatever is needed for the work that has to be done.” (CWSA 12: 169–170)

6. “It is easier to exalt it into self-forgetfulness immersed in a trance of peace or an ecstasy of divine Love. But our more difficult problem is to liberate the true Person and attain to a divine manhood which shall be the pure vessel of a divine force and the perfect instrument of a divine action. Step after step has to be firmly taken; difficulty after difficulty has to be entirely experienced and

entirely mastered. Only the Divine Wisdom and Power can do this for us and it will do all if we yield to it in an entire faith and follow and assent to its workings with a constant courage and patience.” (CWSA 23: 247)

7. “It is not possible to enter utterly into the spiritual truth of the Eternal and Infinite if we have not the faith and courage to trust ourselves into the hands of the Lord of all things and the Friend of all creatures and leave utterly behind us our mental limits and measures. At one moment we must plunge without hesitation, reserve, fear or scruple into the ocean of the free, the infinite, the Absolute.” (CWSA 23: 208)

8. “The Buddha said or has been made to say that when one is free from all desire, one necessarily enters into infinite bliss. This bliss may be a little dry and anyway it does not seem to me to be the quickest way.

If at the outset one were to seize the problem bodily, jump into it with courage and determination and, instead of undertaking a long, arduous, painful, disappointing hunt after desires, one gives oneself simply, totally, unconditionally, if one surrenders to the Supreme Reality, to the Supreme Will, to the Supreme Being, putting oneself entirely in His hands, in an upsurge of the whole being and all the elements of the being, without calculating, that would be the swiftest and the most radical way to get rid

of the ego. People will say that it is difficult to do it, but at least a warmth is there, an ardour, an enthusiasm, a light, a beauty, an ardent and creative life.” (CWM 3: 268)

9. “If the ... condition is not from the beginning sufficiently satisfied, it will be because, habituated individually always to the customary groove, we prefer the safe and prescribed path, even when it leads nowhere, to the great and effective way, and cannot see our own interest because it presents itself in a new and untried form. But this is a littleness of spirit which the Nation must shake off that it may have the courage of its destiny.” (CWSA 1: 412)

10. *“I am fit for nothing! There is still no candid and sincere aspiration. O Mother! Give me some advice. I am an ignorant and obscure child. Guide me, show me the true path.*

You seem to be very conscious already of what ought and ought not to be done, but with you the difficulty begins with putting it into practice. You should ask, not for more knowledge, but for the strength and courage to apply sincerely and scrupulously the little you already know.” (CWM 17: 31)

11. “Whoever makes that choice, whoever seeks to climb from level to level up the hill of the divine, fearing

nothing, deterred by no retardation or defeat, shrinking from no vastness because it is too vast for his intelligence, no height because it is too high for his spirit, no greatness because it is too great for his force and courage, he is the Aryan, the divine fighter and victor, the noble man, *aristos*, best, the *śreṣṭha* of the Gita." (CWSA 13: 442)

12. "The Karmayogin has to remain in the world & conquer it; he is not allowed to flee from the scene of conflict and shun the battle. His part in life is the part of the hero,—the one quality he must possess, is the lion like courage that will dare to meet its spiritual enemies in their own country and citadel and tread them down under its heel." (CWSA 17: 190)

13. "But the faith and resignation of the Karmayogin will not be a passive and weak submission. If he sees God in his sufferings and overthrow, he will also see God in his resistance to injustice and evil, a resistance dictated not by selfishness and passion, but undertaken for the sake of right and truth and the maintenance of that moral order on which the stability of life and the happiness of the peoples depend. And his resistance like all his actions will be marked by a perfect fearlessness, a godlike courage. For when a man sees God in all things and himself in all beings, it is impossible for him to fear. What is it that can cause him terror? Not danger or defeat, not death or

torture, not hatred or ingratitude, not the worse death of humiliation and the fiercer torture of shame and disgrace. Not the apparent wrath of God Himself; for what is God but his own self in the Cosmos? There is nothing that he can fear. The Christian virtue of faith and resignation, the Pagan virtue of courage are the strong stem and support of Vedic morality.” (CWSA 17: 283–284)

14. “But the Upanishad is not concerned only with the ultimate reality of the Brahman to Himself, but also with His reality in His universe and His reality to the Jivatman or individual self. It is therefore sometimes Advaitic, sometimes Dwaitic, sometimes Visishtadvaitic, and we should have the courage now to leave the paths which the mighty dead have trod out for us, discharge from our mind all preconceived philosophies and ask only, ‘What does the Upanishad actually say?’ Never mind whether the interpretation arrived at seems to be self-contradictory to the logician or incoherent to the metaphysical reasoner; it will be enough if it is true in the experience of the seeker after God. For the Eternal is infinite and cannot be cabined within the narrow limits of a logical formula.” (CWSA 17: 202)

VI—Our Yoga Is Not for Cowards; If You Have No Courage, Better Leave It

1. “You are frightened because your breathing seems to stop when you try to concentrate. Don’t enter this path if you are so full of fears. Suppose it comes to the worst; then what will happen? You may die—and then? What great harm will be done if you are dead? Our Yoga is not for cowards; if you have no courage, better leave it—your fears will bring disaster.” (CWM 14: 241)

2. “Our Path

To walk on the path you must have a dauntless intrepidity [fearless], you must never turn back upon yourself with this mean, petty, weak, ugly movement that fear is.

An indomitable courage, a perfect sincerity, a total self-giving to the extent that you do not calculate or bargain, you do not give with the idea of receiving, you do not offer yourself with the intention of being protected, you do not have a faith that needs proofs,—this is indispensable for advancing on the path,—this alone can shelter you against all dangers.” (CWM 15: 190)

3. “It is obvious that your inner being is not very strong and does not have the power to counteract the

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pernicious influence of an environment full of sterile doubts, defeatist pessimism, egoism and unfaithfulness.

Our path is not easy, it demands great courage and untiring endurance. One must work hard and make a great effort with quiet stability to obtain results which at times are scarcely perceptible outwardly.

There are many human beings who need to roll in the mire in order to feel the necessity to cleanse themselves.

If the desire is too persistent for you to have the strength to overcome it, ask the people you know to find you a post (this is usually not too difficult for the young people going out from the Ashram) and go and face the ordinary life until you learn the true value of the life you would have left.

One must have heroism to be a precursor; for, generally, men have faith only in what is already accomplished, evident, visible, and recognised even by the most sceptical.” (CWM 13: 142–143)

4. “If you are not satisfied with what you are, take advantage of the Divine’s help and change yourself. If you haven’t the courage to change, submit to your destiny and keep quiet.

But to constantly complain about the condition you are in, without doing anything to change it, is a waste of your time and energy.

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5. The difficulties can disappear only when the egoistic concentration upon desires and conveniences disappears". (CWM 14: 222)

VII—How to Become Courageous

1. “By concentration again the whole will can be gathered up for the acquisition of that which is still ungrasped, still beyond us; this power, if it is sufficiently trained, sufficiently single-minded, sufficiently sincere, sure of itself, faithful to itself alone, absolute in faith, we can use for the acquisition of any object whatsoever; but we ought to use it not for the acquisition of the many objects which the world offers to us, but to grasp spiritually that one object worthy of pursuit which is also the one subject worthy of knowledge. By concentration of our whole being on one status of itself, we can become whatever we choose; we can become, for instance, even if we were before a mass of weaknesses and fears, a mass instead of strength and courage, or we can become all a great purity, holiness and peace or a single universal soul of Love; but we ought, it is said, to use this power to become not even these things, high as they may be in comparison with what we now are, but rather to become that which is above all things and free from all action and attributes, the pure and absolute Being. All else, all other concentration can only be valuable for preparation, for previous steps, for a gradual training of the dissolute and self-dissipating thought, will and being towards their grand and unique object.” (CWSA 23: 318)

2. “By dwelling on an idea, by tapas on it, we can create not only the image of that idea in our minds, but its form in emotion, its truth in quality of character, its experience in terms of inner being. By dwelling with the will on the idea of courage or virtue it has been found that we can create courage or virtue in ourselves where they were formerly wanting. By brooding on an object with the will in mind in a state of masterful concentration it has been found that we can command the knowledge we need about the object.” (CWSA 16: 725)

3. “Fear is of course a vital and physical thing. Many people who have shown great courage, were not physically or even vitally brave; yet by force of mind they pushed themselves into all sorts of battle and danger. Henry IV of France, a great fighter and victor, was an example. Just because his body consciousness was in a panic, he forced it to go where the danger was thickest.” (CWSA 31: 280)

4. “When we trust in the Divine’s Grace we get an unfailing courage.” (CWM 14: 92)

5. “Such, then, are some of the practical fruits of the realisation of God as the Self in all existences & the Brahman containing all existences. It raises us towards a perfect calm, resignation, peace & joy; a perfect love,

charity & beneficence; a perfect courage, boldness & effectiveness of action; a divine equality to all men & things & equanimity towards all events & actions.” (CWSA 17: 414)

6. *“Mother, here it is said: ‘He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite.’*

It is a magnificent sentence!

And it is absolutely true. There is in *Thoughts and Glimpses* also a sentence like this where I think he uses the word ‘God’ instead of the Infinite. But the idea is the same—that it is God who has chosen you, the Divine who has chosen you. And that is why you run after Him!

And this is what gives—that’s what he says, doesn’t he?—this is what gives that kind of confidence, of certitude, precisely, that one is predestined; and if one is predestined, even if there are mountains of difficulties, what can that matter since one is sure to succeed! This gives you an indomitable courage to face all difficulties and a patience that stands all trials: you are sure to succeed.” (CWM 7: 338–339)

7. “My dear child,
‘He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite.’

Never forget this promise of Sri Aurobindo and keep courage in spite of all difficulties. You are sure to reach the goal, and the more you keep confidence, the quicker it will come.

With my love and blessings.” (CWM 16: 144)

8. “Give me constancy in the will to attain the end, give me firmness and energy and the courage which shakes off all torpor [inactivity] and lassitude [lethargy].” (Prayers and Meditation February 15th 1914) (CWM 1: 75)

9. “Lord, give us the indomitable courage that comes from a perfect trust in Thee.” (CWM 15: 216)

10. “Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become. May we fight successfully the great battle of the future that is to be born, against the past that seeks to endure; so that the new things may manifest and we may be ready to receive them.” (CWM 12: 112)

11. “But of a higher import than the foundation, however necessary, of health, strength and fitness of the body is the development of discipline and morale and sound and strong character towards which these activities can help. There are many sports which are of the utmost value towards this end, because they help to form and even necessitate the qualities of courage, hardihood,

energetic action and initiative or call for skill, steadiness of will or rapid decision and action, the perception of what is to be done in an emergency and dexterity in doing it.” (CWSA 13: 518)

12. “Vital courage must be controlled to be helpful.” (CWM 14: 170)

“Sweet Mother,

What will be the result of changing the vital into something good; in other words, what will be the change?

The vital is the receptacle of all the bad impulses, all wickedness, cowardice, weakness and avarice.

When the vital is converted, the impulses are good instead of being bad; wickedness is replaced by kindness, avarice by generosity; weakness disappears and strength and endurance take its place; cowardice is replaced by courage and energy.” (CWM 16: 412)

13. “The vital as it is at present is said to be the cause of all the troubles and all the difficulties, the seat of the desires, passions, impulses, revolts, etc., etc. But if the vital is entirely surrendered to the psychic, it becomes a wonderful instrument, full of enthusiasm, power, force of realisation, impetus, courage.” (CWM 7: 44)

14. “Your great strength was your smile; because you knew how to smile at life, you also knew how to work with courage and steadiness, and in this you were exceptional. But you have followed the example of other people, you have learned from them to be discontented, rebellious, depressed, and now you have let your smile slip away, and with it your faith and confidence in me; in this condition, if all the divine forces were to concentrate on you, it would be in vain—you would refuse to receive them.

There is only one remedy, and you must lose no time in accepting it: recover your smile, regain your faith, become once more the confident child you were, do not brood over your faults and difficulties—it is your smile that will chase them away.” (CWM 16: 68)

15. “For those who are courageous know how to laugh like this. There is nothing more cordial than a good and hearty cheerfulness. And the word ‘cordial’ has the same origin as the word ‘courage’. In difficult moments, the cheerfulness that comes from a cordial spirit is truly a kind of courage.

Surely it is not necessary to be always laughing; but liveliness, serenity, good humour are never out of place. And how helpful they are! With them the mother makes the home happy for her children; the nurse hastens the recovery of her patient; the master lightens the task of his servants; the workman inspires the goodwill of his

comrades; the traveller helps his companions on their hard journey; the citizen fosters hope in the hearts of his countrymen.

And you, happy boys and girls, is there anything your cheerfulness cannot accomplish?" (CWM 2: 191–192)

16. *"Imagine not the way is easy; the way is long, arduous, dangerous, difficult. At every step is an ambush, at every turn a pitfall. A thousand seen or unseen enemies will start up against thee, terrible in subtlety against thy ignorance, formidable in power against thy weakness. And when with pain thou hast destroyed them, other thousands will surge up to take their place."* Sri Aurobindo

This is to give you courage, courage to act. You must be vigilant and must keep your will, whatever happens. If you put the two things end to end, you have the complete thing." (CWM 4: 350)

17. "If I lay stress here upon defects and difficulties, it is not to discourage you from making an effort but to tell you that you must do things with the necessary courage and precisely not be disheartened because you are not successful at once; but if the aspiration is there in you, if the will is there in you, it is absolutely certain that sooner or later you will succeed. And I am saying this for people who live in very ordinary

circumstances, less favourable perhaps than yours, but who can, even so, learn to know themselves and conquer themselves, master themselves, control themselves.” (CWM 4: 52–53)

18. “So, in all circumstances of life you must always be very careful to guard against despair. Besides, this habit of being sombre, morose, of despairing, does not truly depend on events, but on a lack of faith in the nature. One who has faith, even if only in himself, can face all difficulties, all circumstances, even the most adverse, without discouragement or despair. He fights like a man to the end. Natures that lack faith also lack endurance and courage.” (CWM 10: 56)

19. “These ideas of breakdown and personal frustration are again wrong suggestions and the dissatisfaction with yourself is as harmful almost as dissatisfaction with the Mother would be. It prevents the confidence and courage necessary for following the path of the sadhana. You must dismiss these suggestions from you.” (CWSA 32: 148)

20. “*When I consider the seriousness of this type of severe Sadhana, the ideas of my physical and mental weakness begin to frighten me and I find little courage in me.*”

One thing we want to know is how much you are eating and whether you sleep regularly and sufficiently. These two points are of great importance, for a sadhana of this kind demands in order to bear it that the mind and body and nervous system should not be weakened by undernourishment and lack of sleep.” (CWM 14: 47–48)

21. “Be courageous and do not think of yourself so much. It is because you make your little ego the centre of your preoccupation that you are sad and unsatisfied. To forget oneself is the great remedy for all ills.” (CWM 16: 175)

22. “To overcome one’s fear means that there is one part of the being which is stronger than the other, and which has no fear and imposes its own intrepidity on the part which is afraid. But this doesn’t necessarily imply that one is more courageous than the one who has no fear to master. Because the one who doesn’t have any fear to master... this means that he is courageous everywhere, in all the parts of his being.” (CWM 7: 31)

23. “In fact, however, the divine Strength, often unobserved and behind the veil, substitutes itself for our weakness and supports us through all our failings of faith, courage and patience. It ‘makes the blind to see and the lame to stride over the hills.’” (CWSA 23: 46)

24. “You know what is the right thing to do—to take and keep the necessary inner attitude—when there is the openness to the Force and the strength, courage and power in action coming from it, outward circumstances can be met and turned in the right direction.” (CWSA 29: 243)

VIII—Courage Is the Total Absence of Fear in Any Form

1. “Courage is the total absence of fear in any form.” (CWM 10: 282)

2. “Fear is hidden consent. When you are afraid of something, it means that you admit its possibility and thus strengthen its hand. It can be said that it is a subconscious consent. Fear can be overcome in many ways. The ways of courage, faith, knowledge are some of them.” (CWM 14: 243–244)

3. “Fear is slavery, work is liberty, courage is victory.” (CWM 14: 244)

4. “Vital trust in the Divine: full of courage and energy, no longer fears anything.” (CWM 14: 355)

5. “And I would add this: that fear is an impurity, one of the greatest impurities, one of those which come most directly from the anti-divine forces which want to destroy the divine action on earth; and the first duty of those who really want to do yoga is to eliminate from their consciousness, with all the might, all the sincerity, all the endurance of which they are capable, even the shadow of a fear. To walk on the path, one must be dauntless, and

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never indulge in that petty, small, feeble, nasty shrinking back upon oneself, which is fear.” (CWM 8: 260–261)

6. “Fear of what? Fear of coming out of the rut? Fear of being free? Fear of no longer being a prisoner?

And then, when you have enough courage to overcome this, when you say, ‘Come what may! After all, there’s not much to lose’, then you become wary, you wonder if it is reasonable, if it is true, if all that is not an illusion, if you are not just imagining things, if there is really any substance to it.... And mind you, this mistrust seems stupid, but you encounter it even in the most intelligent, even in those who have repeatedly had conclusive experiences—it is something that you take in with the food you eat, the air you breathe, your contacts with others; and that is why you can speak of the ‘tentacles of Nature’, everywhere, in all things, like an octopus stealing in and catching you and binding you.” (CWM 10: 11–12)

7. “Perhaps it amuses Nature that we should be like that, but we are tired of it, we want to be different.

And that is it. When you have truly had enough of it and want things to be different, then you have the courage, the strength, the capacity to conquer these three terrible enemies: fear, doubt and scepticism. But I repeat, it is not enough to sit down one fine day, watch yourself be, and struggle with these things inside you once and for

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all. You have to do it and do it again and again and continue in a way which seems almost endless, to be sure that you have got rid of it all.” (CWM 10: 13)

8. “As soon as you enter the rajasic nature, you like effort. And at least the one advantage of rajasic people is that they are courageous, whereas tamasic people are cowards. It is the fear of effort which makes one cowardly.” (CWM 7: 26)

9. “Our sadhana has reached a stage in which we are mostly dealing with the subconscious and even the inconscient. As a consequence the physical determinism has taken a predominant position bringing an increase of difficulties on the way which have to be faced with an increase of courage and determination.

In any case, whatever happens and whatever you do, do not allow FEAR to invade you. At the slightest touch of it, react and call for help.

You must learn not to identify with your body and treat it as a young child who needs to be convinced that it must not fear.

FEAR is the greatest of all enemies and we must overcome it here, once and for all.” (CWM 15: 183)

10. “*When one feels frightened, what should one do?*”

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That depends upon who you are. There are many ways of curing oneself of fear.

If you have some contact with your psychic being, you must call it immediately and in the psychic light put things back in order. This is the most powerful way.

When one does not have this psychic contact, but is still a reasonable being, that is, when one has a free movement of the reasoning mind, one can use it to reason with, to speak to oneself as one would to a child, explaining that this fear is a bad thing in itself and, even if there is a danger, to face the danger with fear is the greatest stupidity. If there is a real danger, it is only with the power of courage that you have a chance of coming out of it; if you have the least fear, you are done for. So with that kind of reasoning, manage to convince the part that fears that it must stop being afraid.” (CWM 5: 117)

11. “Indeed, men have always considered themselves victims harassed by adverse forces; those who are courageous fight, the others complain.” (CWM 10: 118)

12. “*When will you learn not to lose courage and confidence at the slightest setback, when things are not, by my own doing, exactly as you had planned? I think it is high time you learned this and I find that you give me very little credit, less perhaps than you would give an ordinary*

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building contractor who, in your eyes, seems to know his job and have some common sense.” (CWM 16: 38)

13. “Oh, yes. All your troubles, depression, discouragement, disgust, fury, all, all come from the vital. It is that which turns love into hate, it is that which induces the spirit of vengeance, rancour, bad will, the urge to destroy and to harm. It is that which discourages you when things are difficult and not to its liking. And it has an extraordinary capacity for going on strike! When it is not satisfied, it hides in a corner and does not budge. And then you have no more energy, no more strength, you have no courage left. Your will is like... like a withering plant. All resentment, disgust, fury, all despair, grief, anger—all that comes from this gentleman. For it is energy in action.” (CWM 5: 256)

14. “And then, one thing is *absolutely* essential, absolutely: you must not touch this occult science if you have the least fear in you. For instance, if in your dreams you meet terrible things and get frightened, you should not practise occultism. If, on the other hand, the most frightful dreams you have leave you absolutely calm, and even at times amused and very much interested, if you can handle all that and know how to get out of the difficulty in every circumstance, then that means you have the ability and can do it. Some people are very brave warriors in their

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dreams. When they meet enemies, they know how to fight; they know not only how to defend themselves, but also to conquer; they are full of ardour, energy, courage; these indeed are the true candidates for occultism. But those who rush back into their body as fast as a rat into its hole, they should surely not touch it. And then, you must also have an infinite patience; because just as it takes many years to learn how to handle the different chemical substances, just as you have to work for long periods without getting any visible results when you want to discover the least thing that's new, so in occultism you may try for years together and not have the least experience. And that becomes very monotonous and hardly interesting; and there is always in man that kind of physical mind, practical and positive, which keeps on telling you, "Why are you trying? You see quite well there is nothing in it, these are all stories people tell you; why are you working for nothing? You are wasting your time. There is nothing at all in it, it is all imagination." (CWM 6: 192)

15. *"Last night I dreamt that in my native village I entered a house where a madman came to attack me. Being afraid of the madman, I ran away for I have always been afraid of madmen, especially violent ones. My movement was slow, but along the way I found a stick and got rid of the attacker.*

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It was a dream of the vital plane where all kinds of dangers occur until you get courage to face them. If there is no fear or if there is the protection of the Mother (which becomes manifest by remembering or calling her) then these dangers come to nothing. It is the fear of madmen that brought the thing in the vital; such things as this fear have to be thrown out of the nature." (CWSA 32: 305–306)

16. "These dreams are quite symbolical of the vital forces that come and attack you. If you face them with courage they are reduced to helplessness." (CWSA 31: 463)

17. "When physical disorder comes, one must not be afraid; one must not run away from it, must face it with courage, calmness, confidence, with the certitude that illness is a *falsehood* and that if one turns entirely, in full confidence, with a complete quietude to the divine grace, it will settle in these cells as it establishes itself in the depths of the being, and the cells themselves will share in the eternal Truth and Delight." (CWM 15: 140) (CWM 9: 43)

IX—How Courage Helps in Sadhana

1) “You say that you are often depressed. It is the vital being that gets depressed when its desires are not satisfied.

In ordinary life, one has to struggle to satisfy one’s desires; here [*in the Ashram*] one struggles not to do so. Actually, whatever path one follows, success always comes to those who are strong, courageous, enduring. And you know that here our force and our help are always available to you; you have only to learn to make use of them.

Love from your mother.” (CWM 16: 134)

2) “Yes, you must persevere with courage and sincerity. You are sure to succeed one day.” (CWM 16: 270)

3) “You must learn by this experience that a courageous and straightforward frankness is always the best way of facing difficulties.” (CWM 13: 133)

4) “None of these four types of personality can be complete even in its own field if it does not bring into it something of the other qualities. The man of knowledge cannot serve Truth with freedom and perfection, if he has not intellectual and moral courage, will, audacity, the strength to open and conquer new kingdoms, otherwise he becomes a slave of the limited intellect or a servant or at

most a ritual priest of only an established knowledge,—cannot use his knowledge to the best advantage unless he has the adaptive skill to work out its truths for the practice of life, otherwise he lives only in the idea,—cannot make the entire consecration of his knowledge unless he has the spirit of service to humanity, to the Godhead in man and the Master of his being. The man of power must illumine and uplift and govern his force and strength by knowledge, light of reason or religion or the spirit, otherwise he becomes the mere forceful Asura,—must have the skill which will help him best to use and administer and regulate his strength and make it creative and fruitful and adapted to his relations with others, otherwise it becomes a mere drive of force across the field of life, a storm that passes and devastates more than it constructs,—must be capable too of obedience and make the use of his strength a service to God and the world, otherwise he becomes a selfish dominator, tyrant, brutal compeller of men's souls and bodies. The man of productive mind and work must have an open inquiring mind and ideas and knowledge, otherwise he moves in the routine of his functions without expansive growth, must have courage and enterprise, must bring a spirit of service into his getting and production, in order that he may not only get but give, not only amass and enjoy his own life, but consciously help the fruitfulness and fullness of the surrounding life by which he profits." (CWSA 24: 748–749)

5) “In the first long stage of its [the psychic] growth and immature existence it has leaned on earthly love, affection, tenderness, goodwill, compassion, benevolence, on all beauty and gentleness and fineness and light and strength and courage, on all that can help to refine and purify the grossness and commonness of human nature; but it knows how mixed are these human movements at their best and at their worst how fallen and stamped with the mark of ego and self-deceptive sentimental falsehood and the lower self-profiting by the imitation of a soul movement.” (CWSA 23: 155–156)

6) “For the sadhaka of an integral Yoga none of these reasons are valid. With weakness and selfishness, however spiritual in their guise or trend, he can have no dealings; a divine strength and courage and a divine compassion and helpfulness are the very stuff of that which he would be, they are that very nature of the Divine which he would take upon himself as a robe of spiritual light and beauty. The revolvings of the great wheel bring to him no sense of terror or giddiness; he rises above it in his soul and knows from above their divine law and their divine purpose.” (CWSA 23: 327)

7) “Then again there is the psychic prana, pranic mind or desire soul; this too calls for its own perfection. Here too the first necessity is a fullness of the vital capacity

in the mind, its power to do its full work, to take possession of all the impulses and energies given to our inner psychic life for fulfilment in this existence, to hold them and to be a means for carrying them out with strength, freedom, perfection. Many of the things we need for our perfection, courage, will-power effective in life, all the elements of what we now call force of character and force of personality, depend very largely for their completest strength and spring of energetic action on the fullness of the psychic prana. But along with this fullness there must be an established gladness, clearness and purity in the psychic life being.” (CWSA 24: 734–735)

8) “There are two complementary aspects of the liberating action of the Divine Grace upon earth among men. These two aspects are equally indispensable, but are not equally appreciated.

The sovereign immutable peace that liberates from anxiety, tension and suffering. The dynamic all-powerful progress that liberates from fetters, bondages and inertia.

The peace is universally appreciated and recognised as divine, but the progress is welcomed only by those whose aspiration is intense and courageous.” (CWM 15: 185)

9) “I knew people who should have really died according to all physical and vital laws; and they refused.

They said: 'No, I will not die', and they lived. There are others who do not need at all to die, but they are of that kind and say: 'Ah! Well! Yes, so much the better, it will be finished', and it is finished. Even that much, even nothing more than that: you need not have a persistent wish, you have only to say: 'Well, yes, I have had enough!' and it is finished. So it is truly like that. As you say, you may have death standing by your bedside and tell him: 'I do not want you, go away', and it will be obliged to go away. But usually one gives way, for one must struggle, one must be strong, one must be very courageous and enduring, must have a great faith in the importance of life; like someone, for example, who feels very strongly that he has still something to do and he must absolutely do it. But who is sure he has not within him the least bit of a defeatist, somewhere, who just yields and says: 'It is all right'?... It is here, the necessity of unifying oneself." (CWM 5: 137–138)

X—The Areas Where Courage Is Needed in Yoga

1. “There is no greater courage than to be always truthful.” (CWM 14: 170)

2. “Have the courage to be completely frank with the Divine.” (CWM 14: 170)

3. “You have remained here and taken to the spiritual life by your own choice and it was at your prayer that your temporary stay was changed into a permanent one. When you make a choice, you must have the courage to take your stand upon it on your own responsibility before your family and the world. Otherwise each one here is at liberty to remain on the path or leave it as he chooses. I think you had better make that clearly understood by your people.” (CWSA 35: 729)

4. “A noblest courage is to recognise one’s faults.” (CWM 14: 170)

5. “There is no greater courage than that of recognising one’s own mistakes.” (CWM 14: 170)

6. “One doesn’t want to see them, because they are not so pretty to see. So one prefers not to know them. But because one is ignorant of the thing it doesn’t mean

that it doesn't exist any longer. One does this: one puts it down on the way and then tries to go forward, but it is bound by threads, it pulls one back like a millstone drag, and so one must courageously take it up and hold it up like this (*gesture*) and tell it: 'Now you will walk along with me!' It's no use playing the ostrich. You see, one shuts the eyes and doesn't want to see that one has this fault or that difficulty or that ignorance and stupidity; one doesn't want to see, doesn't want, one looks away to the other side, but it remains there all the same." (CWM 7: 195)

7. "So, when we speak of mental honesty, we speak of something which is acquired by a very constant and sustained effort.

You catch yourself, don't you, you suddenly catch yourself in the act of giving yourself somewhere in your head or here (*Mother indicates the heart*), here it is more serious... giving a very favourable little explanation. And only when you can get a grip on yourself, there, hold fast and look at yourself clearly in the face and say, 'Do you think it is like that?', then, if you are very courageous and put a very strong pressure, in the end you tell yourself, 'Yes, I know very well that it is not like that!'" (CWM 9: 329)

8. "It is all right to see the imperfections and deficiencies but only on condition it brings a greater

courage for a new progress, an increase of energy in the determination and a stronger certitude of victory and future perfection.” (CWM 14: 236)

9. “Very few have the courage to say, ‘Oh no, I do not know about that, it eludes me.’ They do not even have the courage to say it to themselves.” (CWM 10: 127)

10. “For the same reason, as you probably remember, it is sometimes so difficult for us to learn to think for ourselves: we hesitate to change anything whatsoever in our customary way of thinking, which is most often made up of social conventions and collective suggestions. For our whole existence is based upon this habit. It takes a great courage and a great love of progress to consent to examine one’s existence in the light of thoughts that are deeper, and consequently more independent of the customs and usages of the environment.” (CWM 2: 80)

11. “The deficiency is not in the higher mind or mind proper; there is therefore no use in going back to establish mental peace. The difficulty is in that part of the vital being which is not sufficiently open and confident and not sufficiently strong and courageous and in the physical mind which lends its support to these things. To get the

supramental light and calm and strength and intensity down there is what you need.

You may have all the mental knowledge in the world and yet be impotent to face vital difficulties. Courage, faith, sincerity towards the Light, rejection of opposite suggestions and adverse voices are there the true help. Then only can knowledge itself be at all effective.” (CWSA 31: 125–126)

12. “Then our difficulties really and literally become opportunities. For knowledge, when it goes to the root of our troubles, has in itself a marvellous healing-power as it were. As soon as you touch the quick of the trouble, as soon as you, diving down and down, get at what really ails you, the pain disappears as though by a miracle. Unflinching courage to reach true Knowledge is therefore of the very essence of Yoga. No lasting superstructure can be erected except on a solid basis of true Knowledge. The feet must be sure of their ground before the head can hope to kiss the skies.” (CWSA 31: 212–213)

13. “When you follow a yogic discipline, you must not accept this weakness, this baseness, this lack of will, which means that knowledge is not immediately followed by power. To know that a thing should not be and yet continue to allow it to be is such a sign of weakness that it is not accepted in any serious discipline, it is a lack of will

that verges on insincerity. You know that a thing should not be and the moment you know it, you are the one who decides that it shall not be. For knowledge and power are essentially the same thing—that is to say, you must not admit in any part of your being this shadow of bad will which is in contradiction to the central will for progress and which makes you impotent, without courage, without strength in the face of an evil that you must destroy.” (CWM 3: 221)

14. “The dreams are very significant and show a great progress in the inner being. The first dream means that to call the Mother is not enough; by that the immediate difficulty is dispelled, but the full victory which will prevent any return of the attack is not won; for that you must cease to be helpless before the attack, you must be able to fight and repel it (of course with the Mother’s Force near whether manifest or veiled and supporting you). At present you have got so far that you can sometimes repel it with your safety pin, that is, by a small action supported by the peace behind; but the strength, confidence, courage to leap on the attacking force and drive it out (hands and feet) is not yet there.” (CWSA 31: 477)

15. “If the movement cannot be stopped, then observe the following instructions:

Never allow any fear to enter into you. Face all you meet and see in this world with detachment and courage.

Ask for the protection of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother before you sleep or meditate. Use their names when you are attacked or tempted.” (CWSA 30: 208)

16. “Therefore, the most important thing to do when you are attacked by an adverse force, is to say to yourself: ‘Yes, the force comes from outside and the attack is there, but there must certainly be a correspondence in my nature, otherwise it could not have attacked me. Well, I am going to look and find within me what allows this force to come and I am going to send it back or transform it or put the light of consciousness upon it so that it may be converted, or drive it away so that it remains no longer within me....’ There is a way, you see? When the force comes, the adverse force, when it attacks, the part which corresponds rushes out to meet it, it goes forward. A kind of meeting takes place. If at that time, instead of being altogether overwhelmed or taken by surprise and off your guard, you observe very closely what it was within you that vibrated (it makes the sound tat, tat, tat: another thing has entered), then you can catch it. At that moment, you catch it and say to it: ‘Get out with your friends, I don’t want you any longer!’ You send away the two together, the part that attracted and the thing it attracted; they are sent away and you are absolutely clear.

For that, you must be very vigilant and have a little courage, in the sense that at times you have to grip it hard and then pull it out—it hurts a little—and then you throw it out along with the forces you send away. After that, it is finished. And so long as this is not done, it comes back and back again; and then if one is not in oneself sufficiently courageous or vigilant or persevering, the fourth or fifth time one falls flat and says: 'That's too much, I have had enough!' So the force installs itself, contented, satisfied with its work; and then you can see it laughing, it enjoys itself immensely, it got what it wanted. Now to send it back again means a very considerable work. But if you follow the other method, if you look closely this way: 'Well, I am going to catch the thing that has allowed it to come', you see somewhere within you something rising, wriggling, coming up in response to the evil force which is approaching. That is the moment to seize it and throw it out with all the rest." (CWM 5: 94-95)

17. "If, on the contrary, instead of simply making a movement of reprobation and rejection, one enters deeply into his vital consciousness and finds the support, that is, a kind of particular little vibration buried very deeply in a corner, often in such a dark corner that it is difficult to find it there; if one starts hunting it down, that is, if one goes within, concentrates, follows as it were the trail of this movement to its origin, one finds something like a very tiny

serpent coiled up, something at times quite tiny, not bigger than a pea, but very black and sunk very deeply.

And then there are two methods: either to put so intense a light, the light of a truth-consciousness so strong, that this will be dissolved; or else to catch the thing as with pincers, pull it out from its place and hold it up before one's consciousness. The first method is radical but one doesn't always have at his disposal this light of truth, so one can't always use it. The second method can be taken, but it hurts, it hurts as badly as the extraction of a tooth; I don't know if you have ever had a tooth pulled out, but it hurts as much as that, and it hurts here, like that. (*Mother shows the centre of the chest and makes a movement of twisting.*) And usually one is not very courageous. When it hurts very much, well, one tries to efface it like this (*gesture*) and that is why things persist. But if one has the courage to take hold of it and pull it until it comes out and to put it before himself, even if it hurts very much... to hold it up like this (*gesture*) until one can see it clearly, and then dissolve it, then it is finished. The thing will never again hide in the subconscious and will never again return to bother you. But this is a radical operation. It must be done like an operation." (CWM 7: 83–84)

18. "Of course if you ask me, 'What should I do?'—anyone at all among you—I shall tell you, 'My children, it is very easy, you have only to call me, and then when you

feel the contact, well, you put it upon the thing till that part has understood.'

But here too you must know, it hurts a little; I am warning you, you see, because the thing is clinging somewhere, and in order to pull it out you must have courage; and when you put the light of truth, well, it burns, sometimes it smarts, you see; you must know how to bear it. The sincerity must be sufficient to... instead of shutting yourself up again and saying, 'Oh! It hurts', you must open very wide and receive fully." (CWM 7: 88)

19. "Whatever adverse things present themselves you must meet them with courage and they will disappear and the help come. Faith and courage are the true attitude to keep in life and work always and in the spiritual experience also." (CWSA 29: 101)

20. "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)

21. "*The attack of darkness is over, but my body is still restless and my consciousness troubled. I have lost connection with your peace, the peace that used to make*

the feelings quiet and the body restful. But I can still aspire and I am hopeful to get back your touch again.

However strong the attack may be and even if it overcomes for the time being, still it will rapidly pass away if you have formed the habit of opening to the Mother. The peace will come back, if you remain quiet and keep yourself open to it and to the Force. Once something of the Truth has shown itself within you, it will always, even if for a time heavily clouded over with wrong movements, shine out again like the sun in heaven. Therefore persevere with confidence and never lose courage.” (CWSA 32: 303)

22. “Attacks from adverse forces are inevitable: you have to take them as tests on your way and go courageously through the ordeal. The struggle may be hard, but when you come out of it, you have gained something, you have advanced a step. There is even a necessity for the existence of the hostile forces. They make your determination stronger, your aspiration clearer.” (CWM 3: 34)

23. “It is better [*in dealing with the hostile forces*] to proceed by a quiet rejection and growth in consciousness—and not invite battle—though, if a struggle is forced on you, you must meet it with calm and courage.” (CWSA 31: 745)

24. "But in no case should you fear. The fact that you were able to destroy the beings that fought with you (these were beings of a hostile vital world) is very good, for it shows that in your vital nature somewhere there is strength and courage. Moreover, using the Mother's name and having her protection, you should fear nothing." (CWSA 31: 472)

25. "For Doubt exists for its own sake; its very function is to doubt always and, even when convinced, to go on doubting still; it is only to persuade its entertainer to give it board and lodging that it pretends to be an honest truth-seeker. This is a lesson I have learnt from the experience both of my own mind and of the minds of others; the only way to get rid of Doubt is to take Discrimination as one's detector of truth and falsehood and under its guard to open the door freely and courageously to experience." (CWSA 28: 338)

26. "Difficulties and periods of darkness cannot be avoided—they have to be gone through with quietness and courage." (CWSA 31: 182)

27. "I have always the same thing to say: quiet confidence and courage is the only way of getting out of difficulties." (CWM 14: 228)

28. *"Sweet Mother, here Sri Aurobindo says, "... the difficulty faced in the right spirit and conquered, one finds that an obstacle has disappeared." What is the right spirit?*

... the right spirit means not to lose courage, not to lose one's faith, not to be impatient, not to be depressed; to remain very quiet and peaceful with as much aspiration as one can have, and not worry about what is happening. To have the certitude that this will pass and all will be well. This indeed is the best thing." (CWM 7: 9–10)

29. "I trust you fully and know you are capable of fulfilling quite well your responsibilities. As for the difficulties and deficiencies, everybody has some and one is here to overcome them. This is the meaning of the sadhana of works. Go on courageously with your duties, keeping all faith in the Divine and relying only on the Divine's help and grace." (CWM 14: 316)

30. "To try to go back to the old relation does not usually succeed; the only safe course is to progress still farther and arrive at a new consciousness and new power which will enable her to establish a fresh relation with her external environment. If one keeps courage and always looks forward, relying on the Force behind which supports, there are no troubles, no difficulties, no apparent disasters

even which cannot be passed through safely and eventually overcome." (CWSA 31: 294)

31. "As for his difficulties and troubles, there is little hope of his overcoming them if he does not realise that they come from within him and not from outside. It is the weakness of his vital nature, the inefficient helplessness of his nervous being always weeping and complaining and lamenting instead of facing life and overcoming its difficulties, it is the sentimental lachrymose attitude it takes that keeps his troubles unsolved and alive. This is a temperament which the gods will not help because they know that help is useless, for it will either not be received or will be spilled and wasted; and all that is rajasic and Asuric in the world despises and tramples upon this kind of nature. If he had learned a calm strength and quiet courage without weakness and without fuss and violence, founded on confidence in the help he could always have received from here and on openness to the Mother's force, things would have been favourably settled by this time. But he cannot take advantage of any help given him because his vital nature cherishes its weakness and is always indulging and rhetorically expressing it instead of throwing it away with contempt as a thing unworthy of manhood and unfit for a sadhaka. It is only if he so rejects it that he can receive strength from us and stand in life or progress in the sadhana." (CWSA 31: 698–699)

32. “They can, with the help of this consciousness, deal with their vital as one deals with a rebellious child, with patience and perseverance, showing it the truth and light, endeavouring to convince it and awaken in it the goodwill which has been veiled for a time. By means of such patient intervention each crisis can be turned into a new progress, into one more step towards the goal. Progress may be slow, relapses may be frequent, but if a courageous will is maintained, one is sure to triumph one day and see all difficulties melt and vanish before the radiance of the truth-consciousness.” (CWM 12: 7)

33. “The six years of which you speak have been spent by you mainly in struggling with sex and doubt and vital difficulties—many take more than that time about it. What I have been wanting you to do now is to get the right positive attitude within at the centre free from these things. Its basis must be what I have said, ‘I want the Divine and the Divine only; since I want and need, I shall surely arrive, however long it takes, and till I do, I shall persist and endure with patience and courage.’ I do not mean by that that you should have no activity but prayer and concentration; few can do that; but whatever is done should be done in that spirit.” (CWSA 31: 730)

34. “Suicide is an absurd solution; he is quite mistaken in thinking that it will give him peace. He will only carry his difficulties with him, enter into a more miserable

condition of existence beyond and bring them back to another life on earth. The only remedy is to shake off these morbid ideas and face life with a clear will for some definite work to be done as the life's aim and with a quiet and active courage." (CWSA 31: 747)

35. "But if only once the soul has made an appeal, if once it has made contact with the Grace, then in the following life, one immediately finds oneself in conditions where everything can be swept away [previous suicide] at one stroke. At that moment you need to have a great courage, a great endurance, though at times a true love is sufficient. And if there is faith—a little, a very very little is enough—then everything is swept away. But in most cases what you need is a great stoic courage, a capacity to endure and to hold out: the resistance, especially in the case of a previous suicide, resistance to the temptation to again begin this foolishness—because it makes a terrible formation. There is also this habit of not looking the difficulty straight in the face, which is translated by taking flight. When suffering comes, fly, fly, instead of absorbing the difficulty, instead of holding tight, that is to say, not stirring within, not yielding, yes, above all, not yielding when you feel within: 'I cannot bear it any longer.' Hold your head as quiet as possible, do not follow the movement, do not obey the vibration.

That is what is needed, just that: faith in the Grace, perception of the Grace, or else, intensity of call, or better still, the response, the response, the knot opening, breaking, the response to this wonderful love of the Grace.

It is difficult without a strong will, and above all, above all, the capacity to resist the temptation which has been the fatal temptation through all the lives because of its accumulated power. Each defeat gives fresh force to it. A small victory can dissolve it.

The most terrible thing is when you do not have the strength, the courage, something indomitable. How often they come and tell me: 'I want to die, I want to run away, I want to die.' They get the answer: "Well, then, die to yourself! You are not asked to let your ego survive! Die to yourself since you want to die! Have that courage, the true courage to die to your egoism.'

But because it is a Karma, you have to do something yourself. Karma is a construction of the ego; the ego must do something, everything cannot be done for it. The truth is this: Karma is the result of the actions of the ego, and it is only when the ego abdicates that Karma is dissolved. You can aid the ego, you can assist it, you can give it force and infuse it with courage, but it must use them." (CWM 15: 372–373)

36. "And that other idea that if the body is changed the next one will necessarily be better, is also a mistake. It

is only when one has profited fully and *to the utmost* by the opportunity for progress which life in a physical body represents, that one may hope to be reborn in a higher organism. All defection, on the contrary, naturally brings in a diminution of being.

Only the resolution to face courageously, in the present existence, all the difficulties, and to overcome them, is the sure means of attaining the union you desire.” (CWM 16: 163)

37. *“I want to resume my study of French, particularly for speaking. Can I have some hints?”*

The best is to speak... courageously at every opportunity.” (CWM 12: 219)

38. “It is a well-known fact that if you expect some pain you are bound to have it and, once it has come, if you concentrate upon it, then it increases more and more until it becomes what is usually termed as ‘unbearable’, although with some will and courage there is hardly any pain that one cannot bear.” (CWM 12: 294)

39. “Quite naturally we ask ourselves what this secret is, towards which pain leads us. For a superficial and imperfect understanding, one could believe that it is pain which the soul is seeking. Nothing of the kind. The very

nature of the soul is divine Delight, constant, unvarying, unconditioned, ecstatic; but it is true that if one can face suffering with courage, endurance, an unshakable faith in the divine Grace, if one can, instead of shunning suffering when it comes, enter into it with this will, this aspiration to go through it and find the luminous truth, the unvarying delight which is at the core of all things, the door of pain is often more direct, more immediate than that of satisfaction or contentment.” (CWM 9: 41)

40. *“My little mother, Give me peace. Give me joy in work. Make me your instrument.*

My dear child, I am very happy to know that you want to be my instrument. To be able to be my instrument, you must be regular, energetic, courageous, enduring and always good-tempered. I have no doubt that you can acquire these qualities.

With you always.” (CWM 16: 128–129)

41. “With the Mother’s force working and the psychic being supporting the force, all can be done and all will surely be done. This purification is made just in order that no trouble may occur in the future such as happened to some because they were not purified—in order that the higher consciousness may come into a purified nature and the inner transformation securely take place. Go on

therefore with faith and courage putting your reliance on the Mother.” (CWSA 31: 736)

42. “And perhaps it would be enough if some individuals became pure gold, for this would be enough to change the course of events.... We are faced with this necessity in a very urgent way.

This courage, this heroism which the Divine wants of us, why not use it to fight against one’s own difficulties, one’s own imperfections, one’s own obscurities? Why not heroically face the furnace of inner purification so that it does not become necessary to pass once more through one of those terrible, gigantic destructions which plunge an entire civilisation into darkness?” (CWM 9: 75)

43. “When you feel unhappy like that, it means that you have a progress to make. You can say that we always need to progress, it is true. But at times our nature gives its consent to the needed change and then everything goes smoothly, even happily. On the contrary sometimes the part that has to progress refuses to move and clings to its old habits through inertia, ignorance, attachment or desire. Then, under the pressure of the perfecting force, the struggle starts translating itself into unhappiness or revolt or both together.

The only remedy is to keep quiet, look within oneself honestly to find out what is wrong and set to work courageously to put it right.

The Divine Consciousness will always be there to help you if your endeavour is sincere; and the more sincere your endeavour the more the Divine Consciousness will help and assist you." (CWM 14: 246)

44. "What happens most often when one makes the inner effort that's needed to discover one's soul, to unite with it and allow it to govern one's life, is a kind of marvellous enchantment with this discovery, as a result of which the first instinct is to tell oneself, 'Now I have what I need, I have found infinite delight!' and no longer to be concerned with anything else.

In fact this is what has happened to almost all those who have made this discovery, and some of them have even set up this experience as a principle of realisation and said, 'When you have done that, everything is done, there is nothing more to do; you have reached the goal and the end of the road.'

Indeed, a great courage is necessary to go farther; this soul one discovers must be an intrepid warrior soul which does not at all rest satisfied with its own inner joy while comforting itself for the unhappiness of others with the idea that sooner or later everybody will reach that state and that it is good for others to make the same effort that

one has made or, at best, that from this state of inner wisdom one can, with 'great benevolence' and 'deep compassion' help others to reach it, and that when everybody has attained it, well, that will be the end of the world and that's so much the better for those who don't like suffering!" (CWM 9: 425–426)

45. "The sadhana of all the inner beings, inner domains, has been done by many people, has been explained at length, systematised by some, the stages and paths have been traced out and you go from one stage to another, knowing that it has to be like that; but as soon as you go down into the body, it is like a virgin forest.... And everything is to be done, everything is to be worked out, everything is to be built up. So you must arm yourself with *great* patience, *great* patience, and not think that you are good for nothing because it takes so much time. You must never be despondent, never tell yourself, 'Oh! This is not for me!' Everyone can do it, if he puts into it the time, the courage, the endurance and the perseverance that are demanded. But all this is needed. And above all, above all, never lose heart, be ready to begin the same thing again ten times, twenty times, a hundred times—until it is really done." (CWM 9: 349)

XI—Courage in Normal Life

1. “Not only so, but the mould of society has been long of an almost iron fixity putting each individual in his place and expecting him to conform to it. You speak of issues and a courageous solution, but in this life there are no problems and issues and no call for a solution—a courageous solution is only possible where there is freedom of the personal will; but where the only solution (if one remains in this life) is submission to the family will, there can be nothing of that kind. It is a secure life and can be happy if one accommodates oneself to it and has no unusual aspirations beyond it or is fortunate in one’s environment; but it has no remedy for or escape from incompatibilities or any kind of individual frustration; it leaves little room for initiative or free movement or any individualism.” (CWSA 28: 439–440)

2. “There is another fault which is nearly as fatal to any system of industry, and that is our lack of confidence in ourselves and in one another. Without self-confidence you can never do anything; you will never found an industry or build up a trade, for you have nothing to carry you through the first anxious years when the only dividend is hope, and the best assets are unfaltering courage and faith in oneself.” (CWSA 1: 716)

3. “Every boy should, therefore, be given practical opportunity as well as intellectual encouragement to develop all that is best in his nature. If he has bad qualities, bad habits, bad *saṁskāras* whether of mind or body, he should not be treated harshly as a delinquent, but encouraged to get rid of them by the Rajayogic method of *saṁnyama*, rejection and substitution. He should be encouraged to think of them, not as sins or offences, but as symptoms of a curable disease alterable by a steady and sustained effort of the will,—falsehood being rejected whenever it rises into the mind and replaced by truth, fear by courage, selfishness by sacrifice and renunciation, malice by love. Great care will have to be taken that unformed virtues are not rejected as faults. The wildness and recklessness of many young natures are only the overflowings of an excessive strength, greatness and nobility. They should be purified, not discouraged.” (CWSA 1: 391–392)

4. “At the same time, the opposite excess of being there all the time and preventing a child from making his experiment, by telling him, ‘Don’t do this, this will happen’, ‘Don’t do that, that will happen’—then finally he will be all shrunk up into himself, and will have neither courage nor boldness in life, and this too is very bad.” (CWM 7: 282)

5. “You must consider as your best friend the one who tells you that he does not wish to participate in any bad or ugly act, the one who gives you courage to resist low temptations; he is a friend. He is the one you must associate with and not someone with whom you have fun and who strengthens your evil propensities.” (CWM 9: 57)

6. “Politics is always limited by party, by ideas, by duties also—unless we prepare a government that has no party, a government that admits all ideas because it is above parties. Party is limitation; it is like a box: you go into the box (*Mother laughs*). Of course, if there were some people who had the courage to be in the government without a party—‘We represent no party! We represent India’—that would be magnificent.

Pull the consciousness up, up, above party.

And then, naturally, certain people who couldn’t come into political parties—that! that is truly working for tomorrow. Tomorrow it will be like that. All this turmoil is because the country must take the lead, must go above all these old political habits. Government without party. Oh, it would be magnificent!” (CWM 15: 407)

7. “*Sweet Mother, What do you expect of those students who are going to leave after their studies here? Surely there must be a great difference between them and ordinary people. What is the difference?*

Often, as soon as they find themselves in the midst of ordinary life, many of them realise the difference and regret what they have lost. Few of them have the courage to give up the comforts they find in their ordinary surroundings, but even the others no longer face life with the same unconsciousness as those who have never been in contact with the Ashram.

The work we do is not done with the expectation of something in return, but simply to help the progress of humanity.

Blessings.” (CWM 12: 361)

8. “It is by being sincere, courageous, enduring and honest that you can best serve your country, make it one and great in the world.” (CWM 13: 352)

9. “There are people who... I have known people who were physically very courageous, and were very, very cowardly morally, because men are made of different parts. Their physical being can be active and courageous and their moral being cowardly. I have known the opposite also: I have known people who were inwardly very courageous and externally they were terrible cowards. But these have at least the advantage of having an inner will, and even when they tremble they compel themselves.” (CWM 7: 26)

10. "This happens because the world as it is at present is still largely under the influence of the adverse forces, particularly the vital force which is dynamic and generally makes you act. This force is largely under the influence of the adverse vital, that is, forces which like to hurt, destroy, damage ... That is why it is easier, whilst if one wants to react, refuses to become the instrument of these forces, one must fight hard, be very strong, very straight, very pure, very sincere, and above all, not egoistic. That is, the world is in such a state that in order never to be moved by the adverse forces—the forces of darkness, destruction, wickedness, hatred—one must be a hero, a true hero, who is not afraid of blows and fears nothing, who never turns round upon himself and doesn't have that kind of self-pity which is so despicable a thing. That is why... in order not to do evil, think evil, wish evil, never, under any circumstances, one must be a hero...." (CWM 5: 233)

XII—Perfection of Courage

1. “Perfection of all kinds is indeed good, as it is the sign of the pressure of the consciousness in the material world towards full self-expression in this or that limit, on this or that level. In a certain sense it is an urge of the Divine itself hidden in forms that tends in the lesser degrees of consciousness towards its own increasing self-revelation. Perfection of ... courage ... have their high value, their place as rungs in the ladder of evolution, the serried steps of the spirit’s emergence.” (CWSA 28: 416)

2. “The Yoga of self-perfection brings out this soul-force and gives it its largest scope, takes up all the fourfold powers and throws them into the free circle of an integral and harmonious spiritual dynamis. ...

The godhead, the soul-power of will and strength rises to a like largeness and altitude. An absolute calm fearlessness of the free spirit, an infinite dynamic courage which no peril, limitation of possibility, wall of opposing force can deter from pursuing the work or aspiration imposed by the spirit, a high nobility of soul and will untouched by any littleness or baseness and moving with a certain greatness of step to spiritual victory or the success of the God-given work through whatever temporary defeat or obstacle, a spirit never depressed or cast down from faith and confidence in the power that

works in the being, are the signs of this perfection.” (CWSA 24: 750)

3. “Vedanta does reject the lower self of desire as a motive to action and virtue, but it replaces it by the far more powerful stimulus of selflessness which is only the rising to our higher and truer Self. It does declare phenomenal life to be an illusion and a bondage, but it lays down the practice of courage, strength, purity, truth and beneficence as the first step towards liberation from that bondage, and it demands a far higher standard of perfection in these qualities than any other creed or system of ethics.” (CWSA 17: 284)

4. “It is neither sacrifice nor renunciation nor weakness which can bring the victory. It is only Delight, a delight which is strength, endurance, supreme courage. The delight brought by the supramental force. It is much more difficult than giving everything up and running away, it demands an infinitely greater heroism—but that is the only way to conquer.” (CWM 9: 5)

5. “With patience, strength, courage and a calm and indomitable energy we shall prepare ourselves to receive the Supramental Force.” (CWM 15: 92)

6. “After all, the whole problem is to know whether humanity has reached the state of pure gold or whether it still needs to be tested in the crucible.

One thing is evident, humanity has not become pure gold; that is visible and certain.

But something has happened in the world’s history which allows us to hope that a selected few in humanity, a small number of beings, perhaps, are ready to be transformed into pure gold and that they will be able to manifest strength without violence, heroism without destruction and courage without catastrophe.” (CWM 9: 74)

7. “Our courage and endurance must be as great as our hope and our hope has no limits.” (CWM 14: 174)

8. “Nor, if it be said that only by the luminous example of escape from the world can we help the world, shall we accept that dogma, since the contrary example of great Avatars is there to show that not only by rejecting the life of the world as it is can we help, but also and more by accepting and uplifting it. And if it is a play of the All-Existence, then we may well consent to play out our part in it with grace and courage, well take delight in the game along with our divine Playmate.” (CWSA 23: 328)

9. “We have come not for Peace but for Victory, because in a world governed by the hostile forces Victory must come before Peace.”

“Two things you must never forget: Sri Aurobindo’s compassion and the Mother’s love, and it is with these two things that you will go on fighting steadily, patiently, until the enemies are definitively routed and the Victory is won for ever.

Courage outside, peace inside and a quiet unshakable trust in the Divine’s Grace.” (CWM 15: 81)

XIII—Whosoever Has Courage Can Give Courage to Others

1. “Whosoever has courage can give courage to others, just as the flame of the candle can light up another.” (CWM 14: 170)

2. “Will is also omnipresent. It can throw itself into all in whom it comes into contact and give them temporarily or permanently a portion of its power, its thought, its enthusiasms. The thought of a solitary man can become, by exercise of selfless and undoubting Will, the thought of a nation. The will of a single hero can breathe courage into the hearts of a million cowards.” (CWSA 1: 536–537)

3. “There are times when a single personality gathers up the temperament of an epoch or a movement and by simply existing ensures its fulfilment. It would be difficult to lay down the precise services which made the existence of Danton necessary for the success of the Revolution. There are certain things he did, and no man else could have done, which compelled destiny; there are certain things he said which made France mad with resolution and courage. These words, these doings ring through the ages. So live, so immortal are they that they seem to defy cataclysm itself and insist on surviving eternal

oblivion. They are full of the omnipotence and immortality of the human soul and its lordship over fate.” (CWSA 1: 515)

4. “It is quite necessary that those who have courage should have some courage for those who have none.” (CWM 14: 170)

5. (*While translating Quelques Repponses de la Mere into Hindi, the disciple asked the Mother to explain certain words and phrases.*)

Mother,

In 1942 you wanted to teach me French, but I refused to take your time—and now!!

‘Il faut bien que ceux qui ont du courage, en aient pour ceux qui n’en ont pas.’

(Ironical) It is quite necessary that those who have courage should have some (courage) also for those who have none.” (CWM 17: 270)

6. “*It is a message you gave for the radio.*

‘We want to be messengers of Light and Truth. A future of harmony offers itself to be proclaimed to the world.’

Yes, it is all right! It gives courage to people.” (CWM 11: 250)

7. Story narrated by the Mother how courage can be given to others

“And see how an encouraging word can give help to man and animal alike.

A good Muslim book gives us an example of this in the story of Abu Said, the poet with a brave heart.

His friends, who had learnt that he lay sick with fever, came one day to ask for news of his health. His son received them at the door of the house, a smile on his lips, for the patient was feeling better.

They came in and sat down in the sick man’s room and were surprised to hear him chatting with his usual good humour. Then, as it was a hot day, he fell asleep, and so did all the others.

Towards evening, they all awoke. Abu Said ordered refreshments to be served to his guests and incense to be lit so that the room might be filled with fragrance.

Abu Said prayed for a while, then he rose and recited a little poem of his own composition:

*Despair not in your grief, for a joyous hour will come
and take it all away;*

*The burning simoon may blow, and yet change into
a gentle breeze;*

*A dark cloud may rise, but it passes away and brings
no flood;*

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*A fire may kindle and yet be smothered, leaving chest
and casket untouched;*

Pain comes but also goes.

*Therefore be patient when troubles come, for Time
is the father of wonders;*

*And from the peace of God hope for many blessings
to come.*

They all returned to their homes delighted and strengthened by this beautiful poem of hope. And so it was that a sick man helped his friends in good health.

Whosoever is courageous can give courage to others, just as the flame of one candle can light another.

Brave boys and girls who read this story, learn how to encourage others, and be courageous yourselves.”
(CWM 2: 187–188)

8. “Long, long ago, when Brahmadatta ruled in Benares, one of his enemies, king of another land, trained an elephant to wage war on him.

War was declared. The splendid elephant bore the king his master up to the walls of Benares.

From the top of the walls, the people of the besieged city hurled down boiling hot liquids and shot stones with their slings. At first the elephant retreated before this terrifying rain.

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But the man who had trained him ran towards him crying:

‘O elephant, you are a hero! Act like a hero and pull the gates to the ground!’

Encouraged by these words, the great creature charged and burst through the gates, leading his king to victory.

This is how courage triumphs over obstacles and difficulties and opens the gates to victory.” (CWM 2: 186)

XIV—The Ideal Child Is Courageous

AN IDEAL CHILD IS COURAGEOUS

1. “He always goes on fighting for the final victory though he may meet with many defeats.” (CWM 12: 150)

2. *“Sweet Mother, You have written:*

“The ideal child is courageous. He always goes on fighting for the final victory, though he may meet with many defeats.”

What does ‘the final victory’ mean? What is victory and what is defeat? What do they represent in our sports?

I was not referring to victory in games, but to the victory of the consciousness over ignorance and stupidity.” (CWM 15: 82–83)

3. *“Sweet Mother, What are the qualities needed for one to be called ‘a true child of the Ashram’?*

Sincerity, courage, discipline, endurance, absolute faith in the Divine work and unshakable trust in the Divine Grace. All this must be accompanied by a sustained, ardent, persevering aspiration and a boundless patience.” (CWM 16: 345–346) (CWM 13: 113)

4. “The things to be taught to a child

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- 1) The necessity of absolute sincerity.
- 2) The certitude of the final victory of Truth.
- 3) The possibility and the will to progress.

Good temper, fair-play, truthfulness.

Patience, endurance, perseverance.

Equanimity, courage, cheerfulness.” (CWM 12: 152)

5. “For it is above all through example that education becomes effective. To speak good words and to give wise advice to a child has very little effect if one does not oneself give him an example of what one teaches. Sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self-control are all things that are taught infinitely better by example than by beautiful speeches. Parents, have a high ideal and always act in accordance with it and you will see that little by little your child will reflect this ideal in himself and spontaneously manifest the qualities you would like to see expressed in his nature. Quite naturally a child has respect and admiration for his parents; unless they are quite unworthy, they will always appear to their child as demigods whom he will try to imitate as best he can.” (CWM 12: 10)

6. *“Sweet Mother, How far do you consider it the duty of a teacher or an instructor to impose discipline on the students?”*

To prevent the students from being irregular, rude or negligent is obviously indispensable; unkind and harmful mischief cannot be tolerated.

But as a general and absolute rule, the teachers and especially the physical education instructors must be a constant living example of the qualities demanded from the students; discipline, regularity, good manners, courage, endurance, patience in effort, are taught much more by example than by words. And as an absolute rule: never to do in front of a child what you forbid him to do.

For the rest, each case implies its own solution, and one must act with tact and discernment.

That is why to be a teacher or an instructor is the best of all disciplines, if one knows how to comply with it.

Blessings.” (CWM 12: 361–362)

7. Prayer Given to the Children of Dortoir Boarding

“We all want to be the true children of our Divine Mother. But for that, sweet Mother, give us patience and courage, obedience, goodwill, generosity and unselfishness, and all the necessary virtues.

This is our prayer and aspiration.” (CWM 12: 127–128)

8. DEMONSTRATION 1966

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“Be courageous, enduring, vigilant; above all, be sincere, with perfect honesty.

Then you will be able to face all difficulties. And victory will be yours.” (CWM 12: 282)

“Today I did not study. I still have a headache. I often lose courage and wish that the Sudarshan Chakra would come and put me to sleep for ever.

To have so little courage at your age—it is shameful!

Rest if you are tired, but never lose the will for victory.” (CWM 17: 62)

XV—Soul-Force and the Kshatriya Personality

1. “All the action of man in life is a nexus of the presence of the soul and the workings of Nature, Purusha and Prakriti. The presence and influence of the Purusha represents itself in nature as a certain power of our being which we may call for our immediate purpose soul-force; and it is always this soul-force which supports all the workings of the powers of the reason, the mind, life and body and determines the cast of our conscious being and the type of our nature.” (CWSA 24: 740)

2. “And in the soul-force in man this Godhead in Nature represents itself as a fourfold effective Power, *catur-vyūha*, a Power for knowledge, a Power for strength, a Power for ... productive relation ..., a Power for works and labour and service, and its presence casts all human life into a nexus and inner and outer operation of these four things. The ancient thought of India conscious of this fourfold type of active human personality and nature built out of it the four types of the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, each with its spiritual turn, ethical ideal, suitable upbringing, fixed function in society and place in the evolutionary scale of the spirit. As always tends to be the case when we too much externalise and mechanise the more subtle truths of our nature, this became a hard and fast system inconsistent with the freedom and variability

and complexity of the finer developing spirit in man. Nevertheless the truth behind it exists and is one of some considerable importance in the perfection of our power of nature; but we have to take it in its inner aspects, first, personality, character, temperament, soul-type, then the soul-force which lies behind them and wears these forms, and lastly the play of the free spiritual Shakti in which they find their culmination and unity beyond all modes.” (CWSA 24: 742)

3. “For the crude external idea that a man is born as a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra and that alone, is not a psychological truth of our being. The psychological fact is that there are these four active powers and tendencies of the Spirit and its executive Shakti within us and the predominance of one or the other in the more well formed part of our personality gives us our main tendencies, dominant qualities and capacities, effective turn in action and life.” (CWSA 24: 742–743)

4. “On the other hand the turn of the nature may be to the predominance of the will-force and the capacities which make for strength, energy, courage, leadership, protection, rule, victory in every kind of battle, ... This may be there in lesser or greater power or form and according to its grade and force we have successively the mere fighter or man of action, the man of self-imposing active

will and personality and the ruler, conqueror, leader of a cause, creator, founder in whatever field of the active formation of life. ... But the soul powers to which this type of nature opens on its higher grades are as necessary as those of the Brahmana to the perfection of our human nature. The high fearlessness which no danger or difficulty can daunt and which feels its power equal to meet and face and bear whatever assault of man or fortune or adverse gods, the dynamic audacity and daring which shrinks from no adventure or enterprise as beyond the powers of a human soul free from disabling weakness and fear, the love of honour which would scale the heights of the highest nobility of man and stoop to nothing little, base, vulgar or weak, but maintains untainted the ideal of high courage, chivalry, truth, straightforwardness, sacrifice of the lower to the higher self, helpfulness to men, unflinching resistance to injustice and oppression, self-control and mastery, noble leading, warriorhood and captainship of the journey and the battle, the high self-confidence of power, capacity, character and courage indispensable to the man of action,—these are the things that build the make of the Kshatriya. To carry these things to their highest degree and give them a certain divine fullness, purity and grandeur is the perfection of those who have this Swabhava and follow this Dharma.” (CWSA 24: 744)

XVI—The Ideal of High Courage of the Kshatriya

1. “.. the honour of the Kshatriya which lives in courage, chivalry, strength, a certain proud self-restraint and self-mastery, nobility of character and the obligations of that nobility; ... (CWSA 25: 11)

2. “In Rajputana also the clan family, *kula*, recovered its political character and action, but in another form and without the ancient institutions and finer cultural temper, although they preserved in a high degree the Kshatriya dharma of courage, chivalry, magnanimity and honour.” (CWSA 20: 418)

3. “Those who take up the inner and the outer struggle even to the most physical clash of all, that of war, are the Kshatriyas, the mighty men; war, force, nobility, courage are their nature; protection of the right and an unflinching acceptance of the gage of battle is their virtue and their duty. For there is continually a struggle between right and wrong, justice and injustice, the force that protects and the force that violates and oppresses, and ... (CWSA 19: 64)

4. “The priest-type would develop favourably in the direction of purity, learning, intellectual ability and acuteness, unfavourably in the direction of jealous

exclusiveness, spiritual and intellectual pride, a tendency to trade on the general ignorance. The warrior type would evolve courage, honour, governing power as its qualities, arrogance, violence and ruthless ambition as its defects. The earning class would develop on the one side honesty, industry and enterprise, on the other desire of gain. Obedience and fidelity would be the virtues of the thrall.” (CWSA 17: 291)

5. “That is why there is usually no memory of the outward events and circumstances of past lives—for this memory there must be a strong development towards unbroken continuance of the mind, the vital, even the subtle physical; for though it all remains in a kind of seed memory, it does not ordinarily emerge. What was the divine element in the magnanimity of the warrior, that which expressed itself in his loyalty, nobility, high courage, what was the divine element behind the harmonious mentality and generous vitality of the poet and expressed itself in them, that remains and in a new harmony of character may find a new expression or, if the life is turned towards the Divine, be taken up as powers for the realisation or for the work that has to be done for the Divine.” (CWSA 28: 544)

6. “Indian civilisation on the contrary made it its chief aim to minimise the incidence and disaster of war. For this purpose it limited the military obligation to the

small class who by their birth, nature and traditions were marked out for this function and found in it their natural means of self-development through the flowering of the soul in the qualities of courage, disciplined force, strong helpfulness and chivalrous nobility for which the warrior's life pursued under the stress of a high ideal gives a field and opportunities. The rest of the community was in every way guarded from slaughter and outrage; their life and occupations were as little interfered with as possible and the combative and destructive tendencies of human nature were given a restricted field, confined in a sort of lists so as to do the minimum amount of harm to the general life of the race, while at the same time by being subjected to high ethical ideals and every possible rule of humanity and chivalry the function of war was obliged to help in ennobling and elevating instead of brutalising those who performed it." (CWSA 19: 51)

7. "For what is worst grief for a Kshatriya? It is the loss of his honour, his fame, his noble station among the mighty men, the men of courage and power; that to him is much worse than death. Battle, courage, power, rule, the honour of the brave, the heaven of those who fall nobly, this is the warrior's ideal. To lower that ideal, to allow a smirch to fall on that honour, to give the example of a hero among heroes whose action lays itself open to the reproach of cowardice and weakness and thus to lower

the moral standard of mankind, is to be false to himself and to the demand of the world on its leaders and kings.”
(CWSA 19: 65)

8. “Some people move without a quiver in the midst of all dangers. They have physical courage.

Others... you see, during the wars a phenomenon occurred, we have all the study-cases possible. When the soldiers were in the trenches and were told to come out of their trench and go and occupy another, and they came out from the trench under enemy fire which was right in front of them... then naturally if you value your life in the least, you cannot but be afraid—if you set store by your life; or of course, there are some who could be fearless, but then they would be yogis. Usually soldiers are not yogis, they are ordinary people, because everyone becomes a soldier. In the olden days, a very long time ago, it was those who loved battle who became soldiers. But it is no longer so. It is all the most peaceful poor devils who are taken and turned into soldiers, and everyone has to go in for it. So there isn't one in a thousand who truly has the soldier's temperament—surely not. The great majority are people made for the ordinary life in the ordinary way, those who like quietness, you see, to have their little hum-drum routine of life. They don't feel they are warriors at all. Therefore, it is difficult to expect them to become heroes overnight. However, as the officers have a pistol in their

hands, and if not obeyed shoot one in the back, it is thought better to march on, you understand, than to be killed like a rat. There, the situation is like that. It is not very poetic but it is like that. Well, some people, you see, fell literally ill with all this when they had to get out—ill, I can say, they had diarrhoea, they were absolutely ill. They had to get out all the same, and they did, and then sometimes on the way they were seized by a great courage in face of the real danger.

Others went out like a block of wood, without even knowing what was going to happen, completely stupefied by the intensity of the danger. There were some who offered to go out when the order was not given to all, when it was a mission that had to be fulfilled; there were men who offered themselves. But these knew very well what could be awaiting them. And so, here, these were courageous people, but there weren't many of them. There never are many.

Only, in the heat of action, when the atmosphere is at its utmost tension, there is a kind of collective suggestion which makes heroes of men for the time being. Afterwards it is finished, but at that moment one is heroic. But this of course is a collective suggestion." (CWM 7: 30–31)

9. "The most varied qualities met in the Indian conception of the best, *śreṣṭha*, the good and nobleman,

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ārya. In the heart benevolence, beneficence, love, compassion, altruism, long-suffering, liberality, kindness, patience; in the character courage, heroism, energy, loyalty, continence, truth, honour, justice, faith, obedience and reverence where these were due, ... in the inner being a strong religious sense, piety, love of God, seeking after the Highest, the spiritual turn; ... this was the total ideal of the Arya, the man of high up bringing and noble nature.” (CWSA 20: 164)

10. “In later times, the word Arya expressed a particular ethical and social ideal, an ideal of well-governed life, candour, courtesy, nobility, straight dealing, courage, gentleness, purity, humanity, compassion, protection of the weak, liberality, observance of social duty, eagerness for knowledge, respect for the wise and learned, the social accomplishments. It was the combined ideal of the Brahmana and the Kshatriya.” (CWSA 13: 441)

11. “Besides, everything that happens on earth necessarily leads to its progress. Thus wars are schools of courage, endurance, fearlessness; they may serve to destroy a past which refuses to disappear although its time is over, and they make room for new things.” (CWM 10: 52)

XVII—The Weakness of Cowards Can Become Courage

1. “The human individual is a very complex being: he is composed of innumerable elements, each one of which is an independent entity and has almost a personality. Not only so, the most contradictory elements are housed together. If there is a particular quality or capacity present, the very opposite of it, annulling it, as it were, will also be found along with it and embracing it. I have seen a man brave, courageous, heroic to the extreme, flinching from no danger, facing unperturbed the utmost peril, truly the bravest of the brave; and yet I have seen the same man cowering in abject terror, like the last of poltroons, in the presence of certain circumstances.” (CWM 15: 334)

2. “The indispensable starting-point is a detailed and discerning observation of the character to be transformed. In most cases, that itself is a difficult and often a very baffling task. But there is one fact which the old traditions knew and which can serve as the clue in the labyrinth of inner discovery. It is that everyone possesses in a large measure, and the exceptional individual in an increasing degree of precision, two opposite tendencies of character, in almost equal proportions, which are like the light and the shadow of the same thing. Thus someone

who has the capacity of being exceptionally generous will suddenly find an obstinate avarice rising up in his nature, the courageous man will be a coward in some part of his being and the good man will suddenly have wicked impulses. In this way life seems to endow everyone not only with the possibility of expressing an ideal, but also with contrary elements representing in a concrete manner the battle he has to wage and the victory he has to win for the realisation to become possible.” (CWM 12: 19)

3. “Each one has his own difficulty. And I have given the example already once, I think. For instance, a being who must represent fearlessness, courage, you know, a capacity to hold on without giving way before all dangers and all fights, usually somewhere in his being he is a *terrible* coward, and he has to struggle against this almost constantly because this represents the victory he has to win in the world. ...

And when you see a very black shadow somewhere, *very* black, something that’s truly painful, you know, you can be sure that you have in you the possibility of the corresponding light.” (CWM 7:415)

4. “What is the meaning of this self-contradiction, this division in man? To understand that, we must know and remember that each person represents a certain quality or capacity, a particular achievement to be

embodied. How best can it be done? What is the way by which one can acquire a quality at its purest, highest and most perfect? It is by setting an opposition to it. That is how a power is increased and strengthened—by fighting against and overcoming all that weakens and contradicts it. The deficiencies with respect to a particular quality show you where you have to mend and reinforce it and in what way to improve it in order to make it perfectly perfect. It is the hammer that beats the weak and soft iron to transform it into hard steel. The preliminary discord is useful and needs to be utilised for a higher harmony. This is the secret of self-conflict in man. You are weakest precisely in that element which is destined to be your greatest asset.” (CWM 15: 335)

5. “The emotions are of two kinds, natural or eternal, artificial or Vikaras. Love is natural, it proceeds from Jnanam and tends to endure in the evolution; hatred is a Vikara from love, a distortion or reaction caused by Ajnanam. So courage is eternal, fear is Vikara; compassion is eternal, ghrina or weak pity, repulsion, disgust etc., are Vikaras. Those which are natural and eternal, love, courage, pity, truth, noble aspirations, are Dharma; the others are Adharma. But this is from the eternal standpoint and has nothing to do with Samajic or Laukic or temporary Dharma or Adharma. Moreover, Adharma is often necessary as a passage or preparation for passing from an

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undeveloped to a developed, a lower to a higher Dharma.
The Yogin has to get rid of Vikaras, but not of Sanatana
Dharmas.” (CWSA 11: 1386–1387)

XVIII—The Courage of Indian Religion to Accept God as the Devourer and Destroyer

1. “It is good that we should be reminded of it; first, because to see it has for every strong soul a tonic effect which saves us from the flabbiness and relaxation encouraged by a too mellifluous philosophic, religious or ethical sentimentalism, that which loves to look upon Nature as love and life and beauty and good, but turns away from her grim mask of death, adoring God as Shiva but refusing to adore him as Rudra; secondly, because unless we have the honesty and courage to look existence straight in the face, we shall never arrive at any effective solution of its discords and oppositions.” (CWSA 19: 41)

2. “We have to look courageously in the face of the reality and see that it is God and none else who has made this world in his being and that so he has made it. We have to see that Nature devouring her children, Time eating up the lives of creatures, Death universal and ineluctable and the violence of the Rudra forces in man and Nature are also the supreme Godhead in one of his cosmic figures. We have to see that God the bountiful and prodigal creator, God the helpful, strong and benignant preserver is also God the devourer and destroyer.” (CWSA 19: 382)

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3. “It is only a few religions which have had the courage to say without any reserve, like the Indian, that this enigmatic World-Power is one Deity, one Trinity, to lift up the image of the Force that acts in the world in the figure not only of the beneficent Durga, but of the terrible Kali in her blood-stained dance of destruction and to say, ‘This too is the Mother; this also know to be God; this too, if thou hast the strength, adore.’ And it is significant that the religion which has had this unflinching honesty and tremendous courage, has succeeded in creating a profound and wide-spread spirituality such as no other can parallel. For truth is the foundation of real spirituality and courage is its soul. *Tasyai satyam āyatanam.*” (CWSA 19: 45)

4. “Thus, if we are to appreciate in its catholicity the teaching of the Gita, we must accept intellectually its standpoint and courageous envisaging of the manifest nature and process of the world. The divine charioteer of Kurukshetra reveals himself on one side as the Lord of all the worlds and the Friend and omniscient Guide of all creatures, on the other as Time the Destroyer ‘arisen for the destruction of these peoples.’ The Gita, following in this the spirit of the catholic Hindu religion, affirms this also as God; it does not attempt to evade the enigma of the world by escaping from it through a side-door.” (CWSA 19: 47)

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5. “Whoever prematurely attempts to get rid of this law of battle and destruction, strives vainly against the greater will of the World-Spirit. Whoever turns from it in the weakness of his lower members, as did Arjuna in the beginning,—therefore was his shrinking condemned as a small and false pity, an inglorious, an un-Aryan and unheavenly feebleness of heart and impotence of spirit, *klaibyam, kṣudrām hr̥daya-daurbalyam*,—is showing not true virtue, but a want of spiritual courage to face the sterner truths of Nature and of action and existence.” (CWSA 19: 385)

6. “This teaching does not evade the difficult problem of reconciling the full active life of man with the inner life in the highest self and spirit; it advances what it holds to be the real solution. It does not at all deny the efficacy of the ascetic renunciation of life for its own purpose, but it sees that that cuts instead of loosening the knot of the riddle and therefore it accounts it an inferior method and holds its own for the better way. The two paths both lead us out of the lower ignorant normal nature of man to the pure spiritual consciousness and so far both must be held to be valid and even one in essence: but where one stops short and turns back, the other advances with a firm subtlety and high courage, opens a gate on unexplored vistas, completes man in God and unites and reconciles in the spirit soul and Nature.” (CWSA 19: 528)

XIX—There Must Be the Courage to Admit the Errors of Our Culture

1. “An original truth-seeking thought is needed if we are to take this stand and make this movement, a strong and courageous intuition, an unfailing spiritual and intellectual rectitude. The courage to defend our culture against ignorant occidental criticism and to maintain it against the gigantic modern pressure comes first, but with it there must be the courage to admit not from any European standpoint but from our own outlook the errors of our culture.” (CWSA 20: 89)

XX—Stories of Courage by the Mother

1. “You fall into the water. You are not daunted by the great watery mass. You make good use of your arms and legs, grateful to the teacher who taught you how to swim. You grapple with the waves and you escape. You have been brave.

You are asleep. ‘Fire!’ The cry of alarm has awakened you. You leap from your bed and see the red glare of the blaze. You are not stricken with mortal fear. You run through the smoke, the sparks, the flames, to safety. This is courage.

Some time ago I visited an infant school in England. The little school-children were between three and seven years old. There were both boys and girls, who were busy knitting, drawing, listening to stories, singing.

The teacher told me, ‘We are going to try the fire-alarm. Of course there is no fire, but they have been taught to get up and go out promptly at the alarm-signal.’

He blew his whistle. Instantly the children left their books, pencils and knitting-needles, and stood up. On a second signal they filed out into the open air. In a few moments the classroom was empty. These little children had learned to face the danger of fire and to be brave.

For whose sake did you swim? For your own.

For whose sake did you run through the flames? For your own.

For whose sake would the children resist the fear of fire? For their own.

The courage shown in each case was for the sake of self. Was this wrong? Certainly not. It is right to take care of your life and to defend it bravely. But there is a greater courage, the courage which is shown for the sake of others.” (CWM 2: 179–180)

2. “Let me tell you the story of Madhava as it was recorded by Bhavabhuti.

He is kneeling outside a temple and hears a cry of distress.

He finds a way to enter and looks into the sanctuary of the goddess Chamunda.

A victim is about to be slain in honour of this terrible goddess. It is poor Malati. The girl has been carried away in her sleep. She is all alone with the priest and priestess, and the priest raises his knife just as Malati is thinking of Madhava whom she loves:

O Madhava! Lord of my heart,

Oh, may I after death live in thy memory.

They do not die whom love embalms in long and fond remembrance.

With a shout, brave Madhava leaps into the chamber of sacrifice and engages the priest in mortal combat. Malati is saved.

For whom did Madhava show courage? Was he fighting for himself? Yes—but that was not the only reason for his courage. He was fighting also for the sake of another. He had heard a cry of distress and it had touched the brave heart in his breast.” (CWM 2: 180)

3. “If you give it some thought, you will recall having seen similar deeds. You have surely seen a man, woman or child helped by another human being who came running in response to the cry of alarm.

You must also have read in the newspapers or in history about similar acts of bravery. You have heard about firemen who rescue people from blazing houses; of miners who go down into deep shafts to bring out their companions imperilled by flood, fire or poisonous gas; of men who venture into houses shaken by earthquake and who in spite of the danger from crumbling walls, pick up and carry out the helpless people who would otherwise die beneath the ruins; and of citizens who for the sake of their town or their country confront the enemy and undergo hunger, thirst, wounds or death.

So we have seen what is courage to help oneself and what is courage to help others.” (CWM 2: 180–181)

4. “I shall tell you the story of Vibhishan the hero. He braved a danger that was greater than the danger of death: he braved the fury of a king and gave him the wise advice that others dared not voice.

The demon-king of Lanka was Ravana of the Ten Heads.

Ravana had stolen lady Sita away from her husband and carried her off in his chariot to his palace on the island of Lanka.

Sumptuous was the palace and delightful the garden in which he imprisoned the princess Sita. Yet she was unhappy and every day she would shed tears, not knowing whether she would ever see her Lord Rama again.

Glorious Rama learnt from Hanuman the monkey-king where his wife Sita was held captive. He set out with noble Lakshman, his brother, and a great army of heroes to the rescue of the prisoner.

When the demon Ravana learnt of the arrival of Rama, he trembled with fear.

The advice he received was of two kinds. A crowd of courtiers thronged around his throne saying:

'All is well; have no fear, O Ravana. Gods and demons you have conquered: you will have no difficulty in conquering Rama and his companions, the monkeys of Hanuman.'

When these noisy counsellors had left the king, his brother Vibhishan entered, knelt and kissed his feet. Then he rose and sat at the right hand of the throne.

'O my brother,' he said, 'if you wish to live happily and keep the throne of this beautiful island of Lanka, give back the lovely Sita, for she is the wife of another. Go to

Rama and ask his forgiveness, and he will not turn away his face. Be not arrogant and foolhardy.'

A wise man, Malyavan, heard these words and was glad. He exclaimed to the king of demons:

'Take your brother's words to heart, for he has spoken the truth.'

'Both of you have evil designs,' replied the king, 'for you take the side of my foes.'

And the eyes of his ten heads flashed with such fury that Malyavan fled from the room in terror. But Vibhishan, in the bravery of his soul, remained.

'Sire,' he said, 'in the heart of each man there is both wisdom and foolishness. If wisdom dwells in his breast, life goes well with him; if it is foolishness, all goes ill. I fear that you harbour foolishness in your breast, O my brother, for you give ear to those who give bad advice. They are not your true friends.'

He fell silent and kissed the feet of the king.

'Wretch!' cried Ravana. 'You too are one of my enemies.'

Speak no more senseless words to me. Talk to the hermits in the woods but not to one who has been victorious over all the enemies he has fought.'

And as he shouted he kicked his brave brother Vibhishan.

So, with a heavy heart, his brother rose and left the king's house.

Knowing no fear, he had spoken frankly to Ravana; and since the ten-headed one would not listen, Vibhishan had no choice but to leave.

Vibhishan's act was one of physical courage, for he did not fear his brother's blows; but it was also an act of mental courage, for he did not hesitate to utter words that the other courtiers, physically as brave as he, would not have let fall from their lips. This courage of the mind is known as moral courage." (CWM 2: 181–183)

5. "Such was the courage of Moses, the leader of Israel, who demanded from the Pharaoh of Egypt the freedom of the oppressed Jewish people.

Such was the courage of Mohammed, the Prophet, who imparted his religious thought to the Arabs, and who refused to be silenced even though they threatened him with death.

Such was the courage of Siddhartha, the Blessed One, who taught the people of India a new and noble path, and was not terrified by the evil spirits who assailed him under the Bo-tree.

Such was the courage of Christ, who preached to the people: 'Love one another,' and was not intimidated by the pontiffs of Jerusalem who forbade him to teach, nor by the Romans who crucified him.

So we have noted three kinds, three degrees of courage:

Physical courage for oneself.

Courage for the near one, the friend, the neighbour in distress, the threatened motherland.

Finally, the moral courage that enables one to stand up to unjust men, however powerful they may be, and to make them listen to the voice of right and truth.” (CWM 2: 183)

6. “The Rajah of Almora, in order to repel some invaders who had raided his mountain country, enrolled a number of men in a new regiment and provided each one with a good sword.

‘Forward, march!’ commanded the Rajah.

Instantly the men unsheathed their swords with a great clang and flourished them with loud cries.

‘What is this?’ demanded the Rajah.

‘Sire,’ they replied, ‘we want to be ready so that the enemy does not take us by surprise.’

‘You can be of no use to me, you nervous and excitable men,’ he told them. ‘Go home, all of you.’

You will notice that the Rajah was not impressed by all this noise and waving of swords. He knew that true bravery needs no clamour and clash.” (CWM 2: 183–184)

7. “In the following story, on the other hand, you will observe how calmly the people behaved and yet how brave they were in face of mortal peril at sea.

Towards the end of March 1910, a Scottish vessel was carrying passengers from Australia to the Cape of Good Hope. There was no trace of a cloud in the sky and the sea was calm and blue.

Suddenly the ship struck a reef six miles off the west coast of Australia.

Immediately the whole crew was on the move, each man hurrying as whistles were blown. But this noise was not the result of confusion and panic.

An order rang out: 'Man the boats!'

The passengers put on their life-belts.

A blind man led by his servant walked across the deck. Everyone made way for him. He was helpless and all wanted him to be the first to be saved.

A short time later the ship had been evacuated, and soon it sank.

On one of the life-boats a woman began to sing. And in spite of the sound of the waves which at times drowned her voice, the oarsmen could hear the refrain which put strength into their arms:

*Pull for the shore, sailors,
Pull for the shore.*

The shipwrecked people reached the shore at last and were taken in by some good fishing folk.

Not one passenger had been lost. In this way four hundred and fifty people had saved themselves by their quiet courage.” (CWM 2: 184–185)

8. “Let me tell you more about this calm courage that accomplishes useful and noble things without show or flourish.

A deep river ran past an Indian village of five hundred houses.

The people of this village had not yet heard the teachings of Lord Siddhartha, and the Blessed One decided to go to them and speak to them of the Noble Path.

He sat beneath a great tree which spread its branches over the riverside, and the villagers gathered on the opposite bank. Then he began to speak and preached his message of love and purity. And his words were carried over the flowing waters as if by miracle. Yet the people of the village refused to believe in what he taught them, and murmured against him.

Only one of them wanted to know more and wished to come closer to the Blessed One.

There was neither bridge nor ferry. And the old legend tells that, strong in his courage, the man began to walk upon the deep water of the river. And so he reached the Master, greeted him and listened to his words with great joy.

Did this man really cross the river, as we are told? We do not know. But in any case he had the courage to take the path that leads towards progress. And the people of his village, touched by his example, then paid heed to the teachings of the Buddha; and their minds were opened to nobler thoughts." (CWM 2: 185)

XXI—Prayers and Meditation on Courage

1. February 8, 1913*

“O LORD, Thou art my refuge and my blessing, my strength, my health, my hope, and my courage. Thou art supreme Peace, unalloyed Joy, perfect Serenity. My whole being prostrates before Thee in a gratitude beyond measure and a ceaseless worship; and that worship goes up from my heart and my mind towards Thee like the pure smoke of incense of the perfumes of India.” (CWM 1: 15)

2. “Give me constancy in the will to attain the end, give me firmness and energy and the courage which shakes off all torpor and lassitude.” (CWM 1: 75)

3. “When shall I become a truly strong being, made entirely of courage, energy, valour and calm perseverance; when shall I have forgotten my own person completely enough to be nothing but an instrument moulded solely by the forces it has to manifest? When will my consciousness of unity be no longer tinged with any inertia; when will my feeling of divine love be no longer mixed with any weakness?” (CWM 1: 119)

4. June 12, 1914

MY sweet Master, eternal splendour, I can only unite with Thee in silence and peace, saying that Thy Will may

be done in every detail as in the whole. Take possession of Thy kingdom, master all that revolts against Thee, heal the souls who do not know Thee and the intellects that do not want to submit and be consecrated to Thee. Awaken our slumbering energies, stimulate our courage, enlighten us, O Lord, show us the Way.

My heart is overflowing with a sovereign peace, my thought is calm and silent.” (CWM 1: 170)

5. July 13, 1914

“PATIENCE, strength, courage, calm and indomitable energy. . . .

Let the mind learn to be silent, let it not be eager to profit immediately by the forces which come to us from Thee for the integral manifestation. . . .

But why hast thou chosen for the expression of Thy Will the poorest element, the most mediocre, the most imperfect? . . .” (CWM 1: 201)

6. “In a partial and limited battle, but one that is representative of the great terrestrial struggle, Thou dost put my strength, determination and courage to the test to see if I can truly be Thy servitor. If the result of the battle shows that I am worthy of being the mediator of Thy regenerating action, Thou wilt extend the field of action. And if I always live up to what Thou expectest of me, a day will come, O Lord, when Thou wilt be upon earth, and the

whole earth will rise against Thee. But Thou wilt take the earth in Thy arms and the earth will be transformed.”
(CWM 1: 290)

7. “Thus, my prayer rushed up towards Thee; and, from the depths of the abyss, I beheld Thee in Thy radiant splendour; Thou didst appear and Thou saidst to me: ‘Lose not courage, be firm, be confident,—I COME.’
(CWM 1: 381)

XXII—Other Quotations on Courage

1. “Sri Aurobindo’s first preoccupation was to declare openly for complete and absolute independence as the aim of political action in India and to insist on this persistently in the pages of the journal; he was the first politician in India who had the courage to do this in public and he was immediately successful.” (CWSA 36: 55–56)

2. 485. He who condemns failure & imperfection, is condemning God; he limits his own soul and cheats his own vision. Condemn not, but observe Nature, help & heal thy brothers and strengthen by sympathy their capacities & their courage.” (CWSA 12: 491)

3. “This outward thou & I are but stage masks; behind them is One who neither slayeth nor is slain. Mask called a judge, play thou thy part; I have played mine. O son of the ancient Yoga, realise thy Self in all things; fear nothing, loathe nothing; dread none, hate none, but do thy part with strength and courage; so shalt thou be what thou truly art, God in thy victory, God in thy defeat, God in thy very death & torture,—God who will not be defeated & who cannot die.” Isha Upanishad (CWSA 17: 144)

4. “Nor does dhanam in the Vedic sense include

only physical objects, but all possessions, courage, joy, health, fame, position, capacity, genius as well as land, gold, cattle and houses.” (CWSA 17: 479)

5. “It is, we might say, to exemplify the possibility of the Divine manifest in the human being, so that man may see what that is and take courage to grow into it.” (CWSA 19: 159)

6. “The Rakshasa slays all that opposes him and he is callous about the extent of the slaughter. But he is never cruel. Napoleon had no taint of Nero in him, but he flung away without a qualm whole armies as holocausts on the altar of his glory; he shot Hofer and murdered Enghien. What then is there in the Rakshasa that makes him necessary? He is individuality, he is force, he is capacity; he is the second power of God, wrath, strength, grandeur, rushing impetuosity, overbearing courage, the avalanche, the thunderbolt; he is Balaram, he is Jehovah, he is Rudra. As such we may admire and study him.” (CWSA 1: 519–520)

7. “When I give work to someone it is not only for the sake of the work but also as the best means to advance on the path of Yoga. When I gave you this work, I was quite aware of your difficulties and shortcomings, but at the same time I knew that if you opened yourself to my

help and force you would be able to surmount these obstacles and at the same time to increase your consciousness and open yourself to the Divine's Grace.

Now it is time for you to make a real progress and to check your outbursts of temper whenever your will is contradicted. If you want to please me—and I have no doubt of that—you will sincerely try to collaborate with X and to carry on with him the work.

I do not want anyone of you two to be the boss of the other—I want you both to feel as brothers, children of the same Mother, working sincerely and courageously for the sake of her love.

I hope you will agree to this and I assure you that my love and blessings will always be with you in this endeavour." (CWM 13: 159–160)

8. *"In dreams one is usually passive and one doesn't react as one does in ordinary life. Why?"*

Not always. I have known many people who were far more active in their dreams than in their waking life and who would do things which they would have been incapable of doing in their waking life. For example, I have known people who used to be petrified with fear in their waking life but would express indomitable courage and accomplish truly heroic deeds in their dreams. Sometimes too, if you dream of something unpleasant, instead of

having a reaction, you say, 'All this is only a dream, it is not true, it is impossible,' etc., and in this way the dream assumes another form. Of course, you must be aware that you are dreaming for this to happen." (CWM 15: 328)

9. (Significance of the twelve underground rooms which will radiate from the Matrimandir foundation)

"Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance, Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage, Goodness, Generosity, Equality, Peace." (CWM 13: 226)

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