Chapter One

Illness and Health

Illness and Yoga

Whatever it may be — the power of the illness to prevent the sadhana ought not to exist. The Yogic consciousness and its activities must be there whether there is health or illness.

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

* Physical sufferings are due to attacks of the forces of the Ignorance. But if one knows how to do it, one can make them a means of purification. There are however better and less difficult means of purification.

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

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All illnesses are obviously due to the imperfect nature of the body and the physical nature. The body can be immune only when it is open to the higher consciousness and the latter can descend into it. Till then what he writes is the remedy — if he can also call in the force to throw out the illness, that is the most powerful help possible.

* It is only by the conquest of the material nature that illness can cease altogether to come.

* I do not think X’s trance has anything to do with her ill health; I have never known the habit of trances of that kind to have any such result, only the violent breaking of a trance might have a bad result though it would not necessarily produce a disaster. But there is the possibility that if the conscious being goes out of the body in an absolutely complete trance, the thread which connects it with the body might be broken or else cut by some adverse force and it would not be able to return into the physical frame. Apart from any such fatal possibility there might be a shock which might produce a temporary disorder or even some kind of lesion; as a rule, however, a shock would be the only consequence.

The general question is a different matter. There is a sort of traditional belief in many minds that the practice of Yoga is inimical to the health of the body and tends to have a bad effect of one kind or another and even finally leads to a premature or an early dropping of the body. Ramakrishna seems to have held the view, if we can judge from his remarks about the connection between Keshav Sen’s progress in spirituality and the illness which undermined him, that one was the result and the desirable result of the other, a liberation and release from life in this world, mukti. That may or may not be; but I find it difficult to believe that illness and deterioration of the body is the natural and general result of the practice of Yoga or that that practice is the cause of an inevitable breakdown of health or of the final
illnesses which bring about their departure from the body. On what ground are we to suppose or how can it be proved that while non-Yogis suffer from ill health and die because of the disorders of Nature, Yogis die of their Yoga? Unless a direct connection between their death and their practice of Yoga can be proved — and this could be proved with certainty only in particular cases and even then not with an absolute certainty — there is no sufficient reason to believe in such a difference. It is more rational to conclude that both Yogis and non-Yogis fall ill and die from natural causes and by the same dispensation of Nature; one might even advance the view, since they have the Yoga Shakti at their disposal if they choose to use it, that the Yogi falls ill and dies not because of but in spite of his Yoga. At any rate, I don't believe that Ramakrishna (or any other Yogi) fell ill because of his trances; there is nothing to show that he ever suffered in that way after a trance. I think it is said somewhere or he himself said that the cancer in his throat of which he died came by his swallowing the sins of his disciples and those who approached him: that again may or may not be, but it will be his own peculiar case. It is no doubt possible to draw the illnesses of others upon oneself and even to do it deliberately; the instance of the Greek king Antigonus and his son Dimitrius is a famous historical case in point. Yogis also do this sometimes; or else adverse forces may throw illnesses upon the Yogi, using those round him as a door or a passage or the ill wishes of people as an instrumental force. But all these are special circumstances connected, no doubt, with his practice of Yoga; but they do not establish the general proposition as an absolute rule. A tendency such as X's to desire or welcome or accept death as a release could have a force because of her advanced spiritual consciousness which it would not have in ordinary people.

On the other side there can be an opposite use and result of the Yogic consciousness: illness can be repelled from one's own body or cured, even chronic or deep-seated illnesses and long-established constitutional defects remedied or expelled and even a predestined death delayed for a long period. Narayan Jyotishi,
a Calcutta astrologer, who predicted, not knowing then who I was, in the days before my name was politically known, my struggle with Mlechchha enemies and afterwards the three cases against me and my three acquittals, predicted also that though death was prefixed for me in my horoscope at the age of 63, I would prolong my life by Yogic power for a very long period and arrive at a full old age. In fact I have got rid by Yogic pressure of a number of chronic maladies that had got settled in my body, reduced others to a vanishing minimum, brought about steadily progressing diminution of two that remained and on the last produced a considerable effect. But none of these instances either on the favourable or unfavourable side can be made into a rule; there is no validity in the tendency of human reason to transform the relativity of these things into an absolute.

Finally I may say of X’s trances that they are the usual savikalpa kind opening to all kinds of experiences, but the large abiding realisations in Yoga do not usually come in trance but by a persistent waking sadhana. The same may be said of the removal of attachments; some may be got rid of sometimes by an experience in trance, but more usually it must be done by persistent endeavour in waking sadhana.

**Illness Not the Result of the Force**

Illness does not rise up by the descent of the Force, nor hereditary taint nor madness. They come up of themselves, as in X’s case who never had even the smallest grain of a descent or a Force anywhere. It is only after he went off his centre, that we are putting Force (not as a descent, but as an agent) to keep him as straight and as sound as possible.

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

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A heat is sometimes created in the body by the pressure of a Force of tapas because there are things that resist in the vital or in the body habit or in the brain-mind — the cause of the heat is therefore not the Force itself but the resistance. As soon as the system is cleared there is no sense of heat any longer. But this heat is clearly distinguishable from illness.

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Whatever force is sent is for cure. Increase of illness or physical suffering is not the result of the force.

The Lower Nature, the Hostile Forces and Illness

Attacks of illness are attacks of the lower nature or of adverse forces taking advantage of some weakness, opening or response in the nature, — like all other things that come and have got to be thrown away, they come from outside. If one can feel them so coming and get the strength and the habit to throw them away before they can enter the body, then one can remain free from illness. Even when the attack seems to rise from within, that means only that it has not been detected before it entered the subconscient; once in the subconscient, the force that brought it rouses it from there sooner or later and it invades the system. When you feel it just after it has entered, it is because though it came direct and not through the subconscient, yet you could not detect it while it was still outside. Very often it arrives like that, frontally or more often tangentially from the side, direct, forcing its way through the subtle vital envelope which is our main armour of defence, but it can be stopped there in the envelope itself before it penetrates the material body. Then one may feel some effect, e.g. feverishness or a tendency to cold, but there is not the full invasion of the malady. If it can be stopped earlier or if the vital envelope of itself resists and remains strong,
vigorous and intact, then there is no illness; the attack produces no physical effect and leaves no traces.

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Illness is always an attack of contrary forces in Nature — but not always of what are specially called the Hostile Forces or intended to frustrate aspiration. A desire is an ordinary force of the lower Nature, though it may be used by the Hostile Forces.

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

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These are waves of the hostile force which come trying whom they can touch. When you feel an attack of this kind, you must realise that this comes on you from outside and touches some weak point in you, and you have to remain as quiet as you can, reject it and open yourself. I judge from what you have written that it was the physical and vital-physical consciousness that it made restless and inclined to revolt and it did not take the whole of your consciousness. If you can keep it localised like that when it comes and remain quiet in mind and heart and reject it, then it will not be so difficult to throw it out. The peace and force must be called down into this vital-physical (nervous) part and the whole body until you feel the atmosphere and force pervading you and in you always in all the body and not only upon or around you. If you still find a difficulty, it is because of the past habit of reaction in the nervous being and a certain weakness there; but persevere, do not consent to the invasion of the old
forces. The habit will lessen and disappear and the true Force occupying the body will remove the weakness.

* It is a hostile pressure that is organising a habit in the body of recurrence at a fixed time or times. This habit of fixed recurrence gives a great force for any illness to persist, as the body consciousness expects the recurrence and the expectation helps it to come.

* It is this expectation in the mind [that an attack of obscurity will come at a fixed time] that helps most to maintain the rhythm of the attack. If it could be got rid of, the rhythm also could be broken.

* According to all statements the deaths in early age are much less in Europe and men live longer on the whole. But certain diseases have greatly increased in spite of the advance in hygiene — influenza, T.B. and venereals. There are also new diseases coming in that hardly existed before. That seems obviously the work of the Hostiles.

The Suggestion of Illness

The feeling of illness is at first only a suggestion; it becomes a reality because your physical consciousness accepts it. It is like a wrong suggestion in the mind; if the mind accepts it, it becomes clouded and confused and has to struggle back into harmony and clearness. It is so with the body consciousness and illness. You must not accept but reject it with your physical mind and so help the body consciousness to throw off the suggestion. If necessary, make a counter-suggestion, “No, I shall be well; I am and shall be all right.” And in any case call in the Mother’s Force to throw out the suggestion and the illness it is bringing.

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By suggestion [of illness] I do not mean merely thoughts or words. When the hypnotist says, “Sleep”, it is a suggestion; but when he says nothing but only puts his silent will to convey sleep or makes movements of his hands over the face, that also is a suggestion.

When a force is thrown on you or a vibration of illness, it carries to the body this suggestion. A wave comes in the body — with a certain vibration in it, the body remembers “cold” or feels the vibrations of a cold and begins to cough or sneeze or to feel chill — the suggestion comes to the mind in the form, “I am weak, I don’t feel well, I am catching a cold.”

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A suggestion is not one’s own thought or feeling, but a thought or feeling that comes from outside, from others, from the general atmosphere or from external Nature, — if it is received, it sticks and acts on the being and is taken to be one’s own thought or feeling. If it is recognised as a suggestion, then it can be more easily got rid of. This feeling of doubt and self-distrust and hopelessness about oneself is a thing moving about in the atmosphere and trying to enter into people and be accepted; I want you to reject it, for its presence not only produces trouble and distress but stands in the way of restoration of health and return to the inner activity of the sadhana.

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The suggestion of weakness comes to the subconscious part of the body consciousness and therefore the mind is most often unaware of it. If the body itself were truly conscious, then the suggestions could be detected in time and thrown off before they took effect. Also the rejection by the central consciousness would be supported by a conscious rejection in the body and act more immediately and promptly.

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All these suggestions that came to you were of course part of the attack on the physical consciousness, — the attack on the body
is used to raise these ideas and the ideas are used to make it more difficult for the body to recover. At a certain stage attacks fall heavily on the body because the opposing forces find it more difficult than before to upset the mind or vital directly, so they fall on the physical in the hope that that will do the trick, the physical being more vulnerable. But the sensibility of the body to attacks is no proof of incapacity, just as a finer sensibility of the mind or vital to attacks was no proof — it can in due time be overcome. As for the feelings about the Mother and that her love is only given for a return in work or to those who can do sadhana well, that is the usual senseless idea of the vital-physical mind and has no value.

There is nothing wrong in taking care of the body in regard to health and, if the liver has gone wrong, the instinct to refuse too sweet or greasy or heavy foods is a right instinct. Mother has no objection to your abstaining while the illness is there nor has she insisted on your taking *dal*. Her objection is only to what people often do, getting ideas about this or that food and abstaining even when there is no acute illness. During an acute state of bad liver, abstinence is often necessary. Only one must not create by wrong ideas a nervous incapacity of the stomach or a chronic nervous dyspepsia. She had no other meaning.

I hope you will be all right soon. If the body does not right itself, you must keep me informed from time to time.

* There is a general suggestion in the air about catching dengue or influenza. It is this suggestion that is enabling the adverse forces to bring about symptoms of this kind and spread the complaints; if one rejects both the suggestions and the symptoms, then these things will not materialise.

* That is how illnesses try to come from one person to another — they attack, by a suggestion like this or otherwise, the nervous being and try to come in. Even if the illness is not contagious, this often happens, but it comes more easily in contagious illnesses.
The suggestion or touch has to be thrown off at once.

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

What you felt attacked was not really the physical body, but this nervous envelope and the nervous body (prāṇakoṣa) of which it is an extension or cover.

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A body is not a cloth — nor is a sick body a torn cloth. A body weak or sick can renew itself, recover its vitality — that happens to thousands of people. A cloth has not a renewable vitality. It is only if one is old beyond fifty-five or sixty that the renewal becomes difficult — even then health and strength can be kept or recovered enough to keep the body in a good condition.

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

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It is a pity that X could not write all this time. Formerly when she wrote often she used to get better after writing. It is also a pity that she has been told by the doctors that she is not going to live; even if it is true, such a thing should not be told unless in case of necessity (which does not exist in her case) for it takes away much of the power of resistance and diminishes what chances of cure and survival there were. X’s physical destiny has always been against her but this is a thing that can be cancelled if one can have sufficient faith and inner strength and openness and receive the spiritual force.

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

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

Curative Auto-Suggestion: The Coué Method

It is the final discovery that one makes that in this world every-
thing depends upon consciousness and its movements, even the
things that seem not to do so. In these matters of illness, vital
trouble etc., that resolves itself into suggestion (hostile) and
auto-suggestion. Coué, though he did not know these things, had the brilliant intuition of adopting the contrary method of curative auto-suggestion and giving it a thorough and systematic application. Here it does not succeed so well because the anti-Coué spirit is very strong in many, the habit of entertaining hostile suggestions or this openness to them. Yet in Yoga also faith and right auto-suggestion are of great use until the point comes when no suggestion is necessary because the Truth-consciousness acts automatically and produces its natural results.

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

To bear quietly and in silence does help to release from the reaction of grief, if one makes the vital quiet; but it should be at the same time surrendered to the Mother. For the Mother to know from within is not enough; there must be this laying before her and giving up to her so that the reaction may disappear.
It is certainly better not to dwell on the difficulties or give them too much voice, because, our experience shows us, to do so helps to make them return like a recurring decimal. The Coué formula is too crude and simple to be entirely true in principle, but it has a great practical force, and behind it there is a very great truth in a world and a consciousness governed by the Overmind Maya: it is this, that what we affirm strongly gets power to persist in the consciousness and experience and calls circumstances to its support, what we deny and reject and refuse to support by the power of the Word, tends, after a time and some resistance, to lose force in the consciousness and the circumstances and movements that support it tend also to recur less often and finally disappear. It is fundamentally the principle of the mantra. On that ground I approve of your resolution not to give any more the *avalambana* of the written word to these things. A constant affirmation from within on the other side — of that which is to be realised — brings always in the end a response from above.

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

**Faith, Confidence and Cure**

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

*You have only to admit that the mind and vital can influence the body — then no difficulty is left. In this action of mind and vital on the body faith and hope have an immense importance. I do not at all mean that they are omnipotent or infallibly effective*
— that is not so. But they assist the action of any force that can be applied, even of an apparently purely material force like medicine. In fact however there is no such thing as a purely material force, but the action may be purely material when it is a question of material objects. But in things that have life or mind and life one cannot isolate the material operation like that. There is always a play of other forces mixed with it in the reception at least and for the most part in the inception and direction also.

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Remain quiet, within, concentrated only on receiving strength and health, confident that we are with you all the time, and you will soon be all right.

Parts of the Being and Illness

Your description makes it clear that the obstruction in the throat is not physical, it is the obstruction of a formation of obscure force in the physical mind, — for the throat is the centre of the physical mind. In your other parts of the mental there is not any opposition, but here in the physical mind there is probably a habitual form of old external ideas which are rejected but something of them remains. It is this that translates itself in the obstruction and pain. It is a mechanical difficulty which we must try to remove.

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It is neither the vital nor the body that contains these illnesses — it is a force from outside that creates them and the nervous being (physical vital) and the body respond from habit or inability to throw it away. It is always better not to say, “I will now have no more illness”, it attracts the attention of these malevolent powers and they immediately want to prove that they can still disturb the body. Simply when they come, reject them.

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

These conditions are not always native to the body — they are often created by troubles in the life, some disturbing illness or other reasons — but often it is due to some hereditary cause or otherwise native to the system. Women tend to get like this sometimes if there is disorder of the menstruation.

When there is this tendency of the nervous being, it is imperative to get down peace and strength into the nervous being and not allow it to upset the body or the general system.

*Always the same rigid mind that turns everything into a statement of miraculous absoluteness! It is my experience and the Mother’s that all illnesses pass through the nervous or vital-physical sheath of the subtle consciousness and subtle body before they enter the physical. If one is conscious of the subtle body or with the subtle consciousness, one can stop an illness on its way and prevent it from entering the physical body. But it may have come without one’s noticing, or when one is asleep or through the subconscient, or in a sudden rush when one is off one’s guard; then there is nothing to do but to fight it out from a hold already gained on the body. Let us suppose however that I am always on guard, always conscious, even in sleep — that does not mean that I am immunised in my very nature from
all illness. It only means a power of self-defence against it when it tries to come. Self-defence by these inner means may become so strong that the body becomes practically immune as many Yogis are. Still this “practically” does not mean “absolutely” for all time. The absolute immunity can only come with the supramental change. For below the supramental it is the result of an action of a Force among many forces and can be disturbed by a disruption of the equilibrium established — in the supramental it is a law of the nature; in a supramentalised body immunity from illness would be automatic, inherent in its new nature.

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

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

* I am glad to know the disturbance was expelled last night. Now the receptivity in the body consciousness has to be kept so that it may not at all return or, if it tries, may immediately be expelled. You must always try to keep the quietude, not allow depressing
or disturbing thoughts or feelings to enter you or take hold of your mind or your speech — there is no true reason after one has gained the inner quietness and wideness why that should be allowed to lapse and these things enter. And if the mind keeps its quietude and receptivity to higher forces only, it can then easily pass on that quietude and receptivity to the body consciousness and even to the material cells of the body.

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

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As for the question about the illness, perfection in the physical plane is indeed part of the ideal of the Yoga, but it is the last item and, so long as the fundamental change has not been made in the material consciousness to which the body belongs, one may have a certain perfection on other planes without having immunity in the body.

Accepting and Enjoying Illness

Your theory of illness is rather a perilous creed — for illness is a thing to be eliminated, not accepted or enjoyed. There is something in the being that enjoys illness, it is possible even to turn the pains of illness like any other pain into a form of pleasure; for pain and pleasure are both of them degradations of an original Ananda and can be reduced into the terms of each other or else sublimated into their original principle of Ananda. It is true also that one must be able to bear illness with calm, equanimity, endurance, even recognition of it, since it has come, as something that had to be passed through in the course of experience. But to accept and enjoy it means to help it to last and that will not do; for illness is a deformation of the physical nature just as lust, anger, jealousy etc. are deformations of the vital nature and error and prejudice and indulgence of
falsehood are deformations of the mental nature. All these things have to be eliminated and rejection is the first condition of their disappearance while acceptance has a contrary effect altogether.

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

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By will [to get rid of illness] I meant this that there is something in the body that accepts the illness and has certain reactions that make this acceptance effective — so there must always be a contrary will in the conscious parts of the being to get rid of this most physical acceptance.

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

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It is always wrong to wish for illness. Fever is not a purifying action; it is the sign of an attack on the body and a fight and resistance to the attack. Illness in the body is like impurity in the vital, a thing undesirable and to be rejected. It may happen that in throwing out the illness (the attacking force) one throws out also something within, some impurity which helped it to come, but that is the result of a Force working within and not

¹ The correspondent wrote: “Some sadhaks hold the theory that illness is a thing to be cherished. It comes to us from the Divine who wants to test our faith by it. Illness makes us remember the Divine more often than otherwise. Therefore one should not even ask the Mother to throw it away from us. How do you regard this?” — Ed.
of the illness. It is quite possible that an illness or attack can be transferred in this way from one to another and indeed it very commonly happens; but it does not follow that it happened in this instance.

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It was the mind that did not want it [illness]; this vital when left to itself often invites illness, it finds it dramatic — thinks it makes it interesting to others, likes to indulge the tamas, etc. etc.

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That [weakness of the body] also is tamas. If you threw off the strain of the idea of weakness, the strength would come back. But there is always something in the vital physical which is pleased with becoming more weak and ill so that it can feel and lament its tragic case.

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If this [stomach acidity and colic] is his only illness, there is absolutely no reason why it should not be cured, if he keeps proper habits and diet and above all the right attitude. I expect that the reason why the illness has such a hold and strong effect on him, is in the imagination and the nerves, more than anything else. There is something there that expects the illness, accepts it when it comes and gives it free play. He must learn to keep calm and quiet in the mind and vital being, to refuse to regard the illness and the tendency to it in the body as something normal to it, regarding it rather as something imposed from outside, and he must believe firmly that it must and will go. If he can keep this attitude and open to the true force, the mind and nervous being once strengthened, the illness and weakness will disappear.

**Depression and Illness**

It is not anything physical but a vital depression (in some part of the vital, not the whole) that prevents the body from recovering its elasticity. There was some part of the vital that was resisting a radical change and even, unknown to your mind, trying to go
on as it was under cover of the change in the rest of your being. This has now, owing to this last affair, received a blow and got depressed and, when the vital is depressed like that, it affects the body. You say rightly that it is part of a change or turn that is taking place. But these effects of inertia and weakness need not continue; as soon as this vital part acquiesces gladly in the turn or change, the elasticity and energy will return.

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It is good that you reject the sense of illness and allow no depression. Let there be no apprehension in the physical consciousness; with faith make it open to the Force.

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The seeds of these old illnesses remain in the subconscient after they are cured. So when the subconscient is being worked, an adverse push bringing a general depression may make them sprout up; but they can be counteracted by the Force if you are vigilant and persistent in your sadhana and not remain to trouble.

**Fear and Illness**

If you have fear or apprehension of illness in your vital, that is the first thing to be thrown away, as it helps the illnesses to come in.

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People taking the utmost precautions catch an illness, while often those who take no precautions escape. One has to take reasonable care if there is some immediate and definite cause of apprehension, but that is all.

*  

What is the difficulty [in understanding how the subtle forces of illness attack the body using bacilli and viruses for their purpose]? You are like the scientists who say or used to say that there is no such thing as mind or thought independent of the physical brain. Mind and thought are only names for brain
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quiverings. Or that there is no such thing as vital Force because all the movements of life depend upon chemicals, glands and what not. These things and the germs also are only a minor physical instrumentation for something supraphysical.

They [the forces of illness] first weaken or break through the nervous envelope, the aura. If that is strong and whole, a thousand million germs will not be able to do anything to you. The envelope pierced, they attack the subconscient mind in the body, sometimes also the vital mind or mind proper — prepare the illness by fear or thought of illness. The doctors themselves said that in influenza or cholera in the Far East 90 per cent got ill through fear. Nothing to take away the resistance like fear. But still the subconscient is the main thing.

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

* 

I have gone through the report of the Doctor and it seems to be clear from it — he says so himself — that there is nothing serious the matter and no danger. If there is some dilation of the heart, it was so slight that it was difficult to detect it and all else in it is healthy and normal.

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

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

The human body has always been in the habit of answering to whatever forces chose to lay hands on it and illness is the price it pays for its inertia and ignorance. It has to learn to answer to the one Force alone, but that is not easy for it to learn.

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

* There seem to be two elements in the physical difficulty that is weighing on you. The first is the liver trouble which weakens and must weaken still more if it leads you to diminish your food below what the body needs for maintaining sufficient strength to react — also probably the nervous tendency to insomnia with its consequences. The second is an inertia of the lower vital and physical consciousness which prevents it from throwing off the lassitude, from reacting against the attacks and from opening steadily to the Force which would remove these things. All that is due to the breakdown of the poise that you had for so long, the vital trouble that caused it and the reaction of the lower vital to the insistence on throwing out the causes of the trouble. This reaction seems to have been a listlessness at losing the things to which it was still holding — such a reaction always brings the inertia of the physical consciousness, while the right reaction in the lower vital brings on the contrary a sense of peace, release, quietude which definitely opens the lowest physical parts to the higher consciousness and force. If you can get over this and get back the old poise, then all these things can be made to disappear.

X was of course right from the medical point of view in recommending exercise — both for the liver and as a tonic to the body it is helpful. So some walking may be advisable. Care
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should be taken of the body certainly, the care that is needed for its good condition, rest, sleep, proper food, sufficient exercise; what is not good is too much preoccupation with it, anxiety, despondency in illness etc., for these things only favour the prolongation of ill-health or weakness. For such things as the liver attacks treatment can always be taken when necessary.

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

Anger and Illness

What has caused all the trouble for X is his insistence on his ego, its ideas, claims, desires, intentions and his aggressiveness in expressing them so that he quarrels with everybody. This quarrelsomeness opens him to all sorts of forces of the vital plane and their attacks. It is also the cause of the damage done to the liver and organs of digestion — for anger and quarrelsomeness always tend to spoil the liver and through it the stomach and intestines. As his quarrelsomeness is colossal, so also is the damage done to liver and digestion extreme. He must get rid of his egoism, quarrelsomeness and bad feelings towards others, if he wants to recover his health and his sadhana.

Work and Illness

I do not know why working with X must make good health impossible, unless you mean that there is too much work imposed on you, — but then the work can be lessened. In fact a complete rest and relief from the work can be arranged at present and for the future we can see afterwards. If you mean that working according to somebody else’s ideas makes or keeps you ill, I do not see why it should be so. 999 people out of every 1000 do that — only a few are able to carry out their own ideas and even they have to a large extent to suit their ideas to those of other people in the actual execution of their work. If you mean
that to have to work under discipline, doing things in what you consider not the best way, makes you nervous, discouraged and ill, that is a pity. It would be so much better if you could leave the responsibility of the way of doing things to the Mother and do cheerfully what you have to do. However, if you cannot bring yourself to that attitude, some other way will have to be found hereafter. But at the present, if that is the case, to take rest as a relief would seem the only way.

*  

It is no use stopping work because of rheumatism (unless it is of the kind that disables one from working), — it only makes things worse.

Sleep and Illness

Yes. If you don’t sleep enough the physical system becomes more open to these attacks [of illness]. If it is kept in good condition, then usually it repels them automatically and one does not notice even that there has been an attack.

*  

I said that when the body is in good condition it automatically repels any attack of illness which is in the air without the mind even having to notice that there is an attack. If the attack is automatically repelled what is the need of dealing with it?

Pain

Pain is caused because the physical consciousness in the Ignorance is too limited to bear the touches that come upon it. Otherwise, to cosmic consciousness in its state of complete knowledge and complete experience, all touches come as Ananda.

*  

Yes — all pain can become Ananda — pain is only the perversion of what in the original Consciousness would be Ananda.
Pain can be turned into Ananda, but I don’t think that there is a special stage for that.

* Peace in the cells first, then consolidated force [is the secret of being able to bear heat and cold]. Pain and discomfort come from a physical consciousness not forceful enough to determine its own reaction to things.

* The healing of the nervous pain in the stomach does not depend on more or less eating — often these pains come when one does not eat enough, not only when one eats too much — so it is not by eating less you can cure it.

These pains are a part of the pressure of the old nature on the body; that is why we consider it can only be healed by the Peace and Power bringing a new movement of the physical nature there. In the stage of the struggle between the two natures, the peace does not always remain, but it will remain longer and longer as you get the habit of opening constantly to it.

* The pains in the body come from the same source as the trouble in the vital nature; both are attacks from the same outside Force that wants to mislead or, when it cannot mislead, to trouble and disturb you. When once you can get rid of the vital invasion and prevent its recurrence, it will be easier to get rid too of the physical trouble whose origin is nervous (vital-physical); although its symptoms seem to be those of a physical illness, it is really an attack on the nervous part and a weakening of it for the time that gives you these pains.

Remain always quiet and persist in opening yourself. The Force that releases you from the vital trouble, can also remove the disturbance in the nervous part and the physical body.

* The physical pain is obviously due to attacks — any physical
cause being only a means for the action of the attack. I have of-
ten seen that when the mind and consciousness have rejected the
attacks, the contrary forces fall on some weak point in the body
hoping that by pain or illness they will depress the consciousness
and so make it less strong to resist and reject them. We must see
whether this recurrence of the pain cannot be quietly pushed out
altogether.

* 

It is a great gain if you feel no depression when the attack on
the body comes.

The pain itself is, from your description, evidently nervous
and, if you develop openness in the more physical layers of the
being, then the action of the Force can always remove it or
you will yourself be able to use the Force to push it away. It is a
matter of getting the habit of opening in the body consciousness.

The consciousness or unconsciousness, as you have seen in
the matter of the French studies, is dependent on the condition.
It is not that you are unconscious, but that the physical being
is prone to the tamasic condition (the condition of inertia) and
then it becomes either inactive or obscure, stupid and uncon-
scious; when the tamas goes away the condition becomes bright
and what was difficult before becomes natural and easy. The
whole thing is to get the physical out of its habit of falling back
into tamas or inertia, and that can be done by opening and
accustoming it to the action of the Force. When the action of
the Force becomes constant, then there will be no more tamas.

* 

You had opened your consciousness, so the pain disappeared. If
it came back during sleep, it must have been because you lost
touch and fell back into the ordinary consciousness. That often
happens.

* 

Pains of that kind must be due to some resistance or obstruction
to the force on the body — it is not the pressure that creates them.

*
All these pains are a sign that you have put too great and sudden a strain on your physical system. The mind and vital were ready, but the body could not follow. You will have to diminish your work until you recover from the pains and fatigue. You may remember that I suggested to you to do only part of the sweeping work; it was for this reason that I was not sure that the physical system was ready. Now you should follow that — do only part of the work and ask X to arrange for the rest. See whether with this diminution and taking rest during the spare time the pain and the fatigue of the body disappear. If it does, then we can see what is best to do.

That is what they [pains] do at first; when one drives them out of one place, they go to another. It is better than their fixing in any place.

Separation and Detachment from Pain

The body [experiences physical pain], naturally — but the body transmits it to the vital and mental. With the ordinary consciousness the vital gets disturbed and afflicted and its forces diminished, the mind identifies and is upset. The mind has to remain unmoved, the vital unaffected, and the body has to learn to take it with equality so that the higher Force may work.

The Self is never affected by any kind of pain. The psychic takes it quietly and offers it to the Divine for what is necessary to be done.

You must arrive at a complete separation of your consciousness from these feelings of the body and its acceptance of illness and from that separated consciousness act upon the body. It is only so that these things can be got rid of or at least neutralised.

If it [the consciousness] is separate, it should not suffer from
them [pains]. Even for the pains, the body may suffer but the consciousness should not feel itself suffering or overpowered.

I suppose there are only two ways [to prevent the lowering effect of pain]: (1) to think of something else if you can manage it, (2) to be able to detach yourself from the body consciousness, so that the body alone feels the pain, the mind and the vital are not affected.

It is a detachment of even the physical mind from the pain that makes one able to go on as if nothing were there, but this detachment of the physical mind is not easy to acquire.

It is by an attack on your physical consciousness that the old forces are bringing back the wrong condition. As you got the power before to stand back from the vital movement and localise it, while the rest of your consciousness observed and was not overpowered, so you must learn to stand back from the physical pain or uneasiness and localise it. If you can do that and do it completely, the pain or uneasiness itself will be more easily and quietly removed and you will not be overpowered like this with the sense of weakness. You can see that the Force has the power to take away the pains; but you allow yourself to be nervously overcome and therefore it is difficult for it to act with a continuous result. What was done at that time in the vital, must be done in the physical also. It is the only way to get free from the attacks.

The main difficulty seems to be that you are too subject to an excitement of the nerves — it is only by bringing quietude and calm into the whole being that a steady progress in the sadhana can be assured.

The first thing to be done in order to recover is to stop
yielding to the attack of the nerves — the more you yield and identify yourself with these ideas and feelings, the more they increase. You have to draw back and find back something in you that is not affected by pains and depressions, then from there you can get rid of the pains and depressions.