23 September 1953

“Each spot of the body is symbolical of an inner movement; there is there a world of subtle correspondences. But this is a long and complex subject and we cannot enter into its details just now. The particular place in the body affected by an illness is an index to the nature of the inner disharmony that has taken place. It points to the origin, it is a sign of the cause of the ailment. It reveals too the nature of the resistance that prevents the whole being from advancing at the same high speed. It indicates the treatment and the cure. If one could perfectly understand where the mistake is, find out what has been unreceptive, open that part and put the force and the light there, it would be possible to re-establish in a moment the harmony that has been disturbed and the illness would immediately go.”

Questions and Answers 1929–1931 (16 June 1929)

Why is “each spot of the body symbolical of an inner movement”? Because the whole physical world is the symbol of universal movements. So our body is the symbol of our inner movements. The whole world, the whole physical world is like a crystallisation — it is a materialisation, a crystallisation — of the movements in other planes of the universe. It is like the end of a process, it is as though a projection on something that retains the image, fixes the image. Therefore, at every point it is the same thing as in the whole material universe.

The material is a plane, isn’t it?

Yes, it is a final result. There is an increasing materiality and a
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decreasing materiality, and the physical plane is at the centre: it is like a screen on which all the intervening vibrations are projected and held, as upon a screen — it is an image, an image of all that is happening. We notice it because it is a thing done, something concrete. It is as though you viewed the whole universe as a movement of force and this movement of force were projected till it met a screen and on the screen it made an image, and this image on the screen is the physical world. And it is a mere image. The physical world which everyone takes as the only reality is simply an image. It is the image of all that happens in what we call the invisible. It becomes visible to us because there is a screen which intervenes and stops the vibrations and that produces an image. If there were no such screen the vibrations would move on and nothing would be seen. And yet all the movements would exist. But for us they would be invisible, if there were no screen to stop the vibrations.

For the ordinary consciousness it is the image alone that is true, and what happens behind it is more or less problematical, but in the true consciousness, all that happens behind or before is the true thing and what one sees externally is only an image, that is to say, a projection on a screen, of something which exists altogether independently. So, our body represents a small fragment in this set of images that is projected and it is a fragment which expresses exactly all the vibrations of the inner state corresponding to this little point that is the body.

*What is the cause of illnesses in animals?*

I think, as in men, so in animals, there are as many causes as there are illnesses. These are perhaps psychological movements, for animals have psychological movements. They are perhaps accidents, for there is a whole domain of accidents. In fact, scientists say that all diseases, even death, are always accidental. It is not a normal condition. So, for animals, it may be that, and it is perhaps also a psychological condition.
For animals who live with man, it is a sure fact. What they have gained from this, these poor creatures, is to become as sensitive and unbalanced as men, without getting their intelligence! For example, animals possess a very sure instinct; you put a cow in a field where there are all kinds of grasses—good and bad, and some which are even poisonous; but never will a cow touch a bad and poisonous herb. Never. With the tip of its tongue it chooses quite surely what is good and leaves the rest aside. But if you cut the grass and mix up the good and bad together and you put that in the manger before the cow, it will eat up everything and poison itself, for it has a kind of trust—an ignorant trust—that what is placed there before it is for eating, and so it loses its instinct. Animals in their natural state do not ever overeat, they eat according to their hunger and if some food is left over and they do not want it to be eaten by others, they hide it, bury it; they hide it with great care so that they may find it again when they are hungry. But an animal living with man loses this instinct and eats not only all that is given but all that's left within its reach. I lived for some time in a small town in the south of France. There was a grocer there who kept goats and one of them had become quite greedy. He had just received a barrel of molasses—you know what molasses is?... How do you call it here? It is crude sugar, “jaggery”. He had received a barrel of jaggery and he opened it—he opened the lid and forgot to put it back. And there it was and the goat was roaming around. The goat thought that it must be quite good since it was left there within its reach! It began to eat it and found it truly excellent. And it went on—as it had lost all its instinct—until literally it fell dead, having eaten too much. Well, a wild animal would never do that. These are the advantages of man’s company!

No question?
Then we shall drop the subject. It seems this lady1 was quite preoccupied with maladies.

1 The one who put the questions in Questions and Answers 1929–1931.
You said that this physical world was a projection of invisible worlds. Then why should the divine Emanations come into the physical world to transform it? They have only to do the work in the invisible planes; then the projections will be good.

That indeed is a serious question!... You know the image sometimes given to the universe: a serpent biting its tail? And it is taken as the symbol of the infinite, of the universe. Well, it is a fact. In the creation there is a progressive, a greater and greater materialisation. But we could take another image (I am taking an approximate image): the universe is a circle or rather a sphere (but for the convenience of explanation, let us take a circle). There is a progressive descent from the most subtle to the most material. But the most material happens to touch the point of origin of the most subtle. Then, if you understand the image, instead of going all the way round to change matter, it is much more easy to do the thing directly, for the two extremities meet — the extremely subtle and the extremely material touch, since it is a sphere. Hence, instead of doing all that (Mother draws a circle), it is much better to do this (Mother touches the extreme material end of the circle). In fact, psychologically it is that. The rest will follow quite naturally. If that is done (Mother touches the same extreme material end), all the rest will get settled as a matter of course. And it is not even like this! It is precisely for the convenience of work that all has been concentrated or concretised at one point so that instead of having to spread oneself out in the infinite to change things, one can work just on the point that serves as the symbol of the whole universe. And from the occult standpoint, earth (which is nothing from the astronomical standpoint; in the immensity of the astronomical skies, earth is a thing absolutely without interest and without importance), but from the occult and spiritual point of view, earth is the concentrated symbol of the universe. For it is much more easy to work on one point than in a diluted vastness. All
those who do the work know this. Well, for the convenience and necessity of work, the whole universe has been concentrated and condensed symbolically in a grain of sand which is called Earth. And therefore it is the symbol of everything; all that is to be changed, all that is to be transformed, all that is to be converted is there. This means that if one concentrates on this work and does it there, all the rest will follow automatically, otherwise there will be no end — and no hope.

But that is also why this point appears as particularly bad! Because everything is concentrated. And that can be particularly good also. For always there are the two, the two opposites are together. And always the best borders on the worst, or the worst borders on the best (it depends on the side you look from). But it is because of the worst that you can find the best and it is because of the best that you can transform the worst — the two act and react upon each other.... That was published in the Bulletin: the “Evil Persona”. It is always said that there is a dark double of all the stars and a luminous double of all the planets. In the occult way, it is said that there is a luminous earth. All that is the experience of the luminous earth. Sri Aurobindo has described the experience.

What experience?

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2 “What you say about the “Evil Persona” interests me greatly as it answers to my consistent experience that a person greatly endowed for the work has, always or almost always — perhaps one ought not to make a too rigid universal rule about these things — a being attached to him, sometimes appearing like a part of him, which is just the contradiction of the thing he centrally represents in the work to be done. Or, if it is not there at first, not bound to his personality, a force of this kind enters into his environment as soon as he begins his movement to realise. Its business seems to be to oppose, to create stumblings and wrong conditions, in a word, to set before him the whole problem of the work he has started to do. It would seem as if the problem could not, in the occult economy of things, be solved otherwise than by the predestined instrument making the difficulty his own. That would explain many things that seem very disconcerting on the surface.”

Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga, SABCL Vol. 24, p. 1660
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It is an experience that I had and I wrote about it to Sri Aurobindo. He answered me saying that it was an experience of Vedic times, an experience that happened in the luminous double of the earth.... That will come out somewhere one day.\(^3\)

\(^3\) The experience referred to is one which the Mother had on 26 November 1915. This has been described in her *Prayers and Meditations*. Sri Aurobindo’s reply to the Mother, dated 31 December 1915, is published in *The Mother*, SABCL Vol. 25, p. 384.