

# On Death and its place in Integral Yoga

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# The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad:

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असतो मा सद्गमय।

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय।

मृत्योर्मांमृतं गमय।

asato mā sad gamaya |

tamaso mā jyotirgamaya |

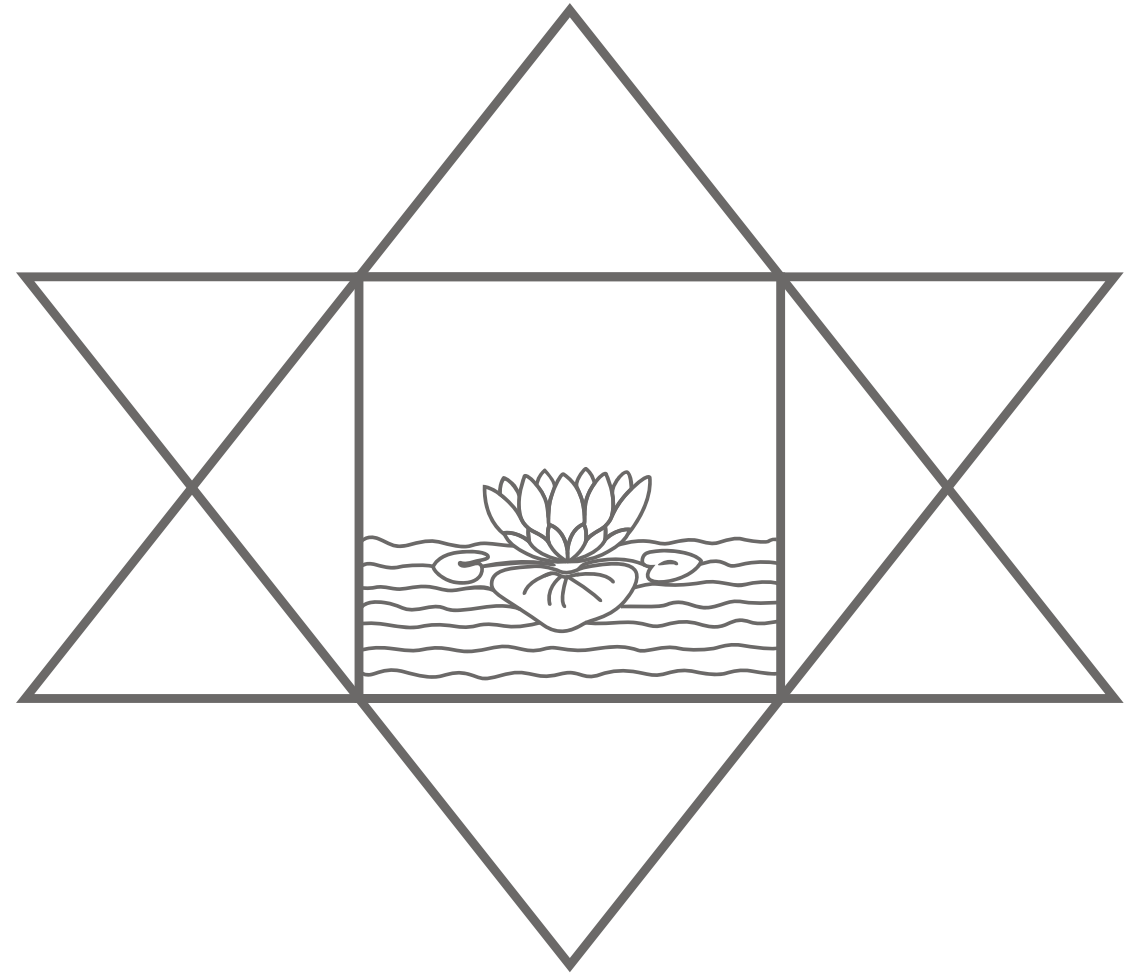
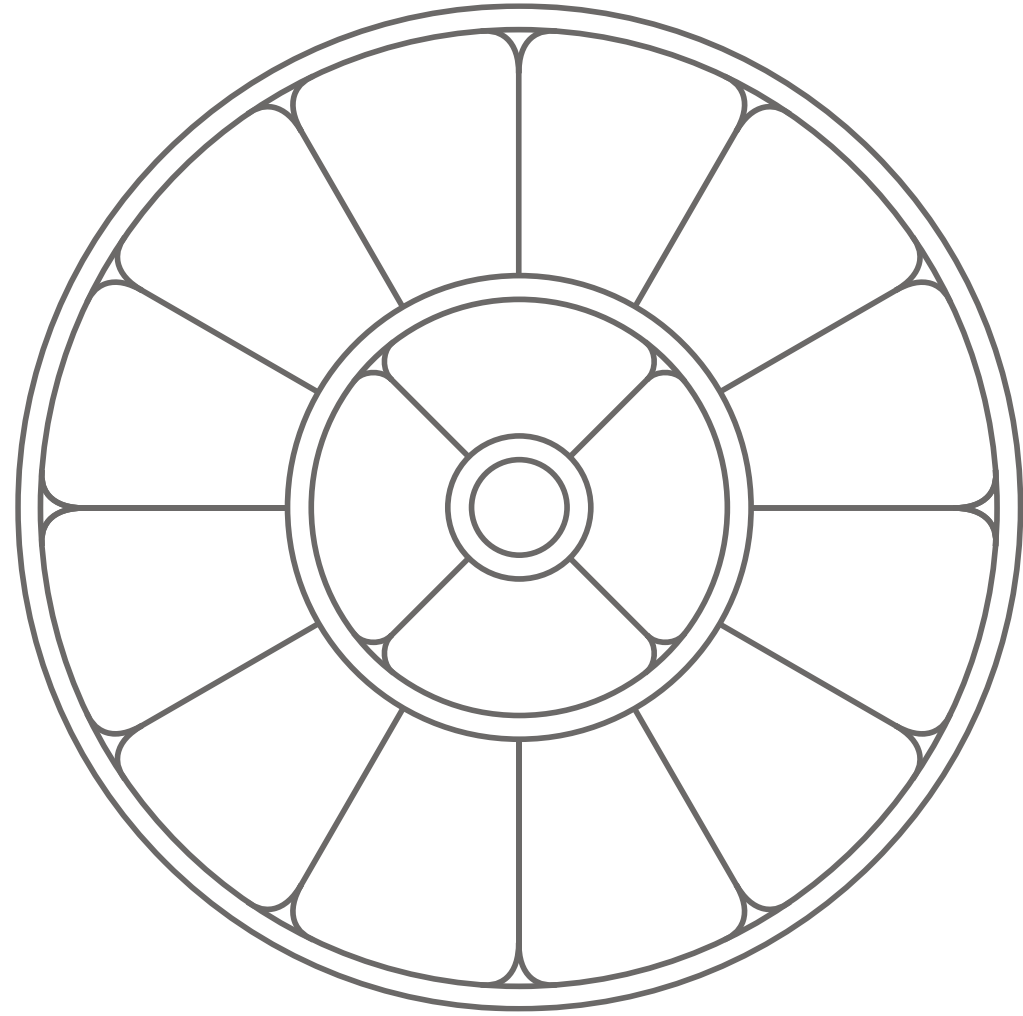
mṛtyor māmṛtaṁ gamaya |

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Lead me from Nonbeing to Being!

Lead me from Darkness to Light!

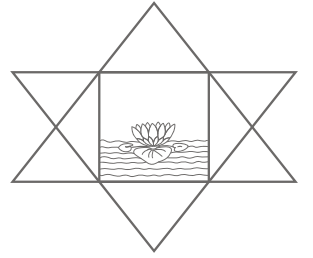
Lead me from Death to Immortality!



Part 1

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother  
on Death and Immortality

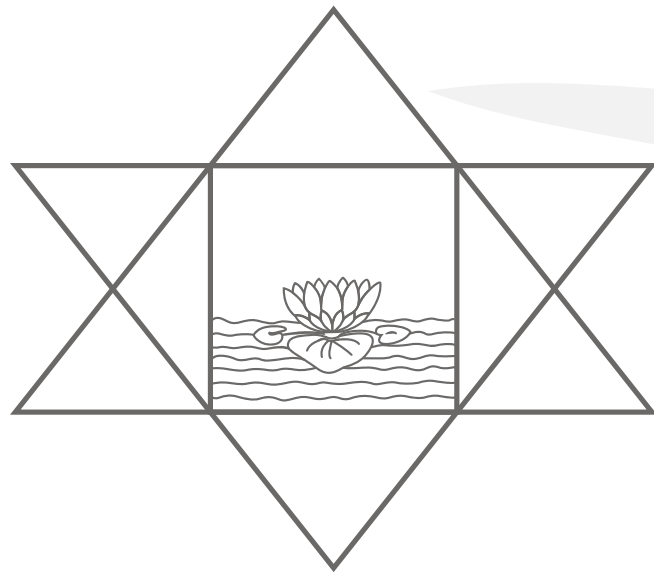
# The justification of Death



The nature of physical life imposes death because all life exists by a mutual devouring and struggle and Life itself feeds upon the forms it creates;

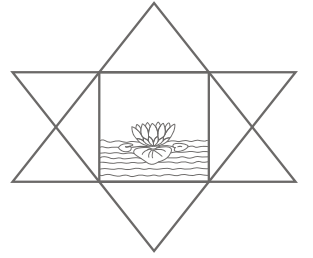
but the fundamental justification of **Death** is the necessity of a constant variation of experience in succession of **Time**, the soul seeking thus to enlarge itself and move towards the realisation of its own infinity.

# On the Cause of Death



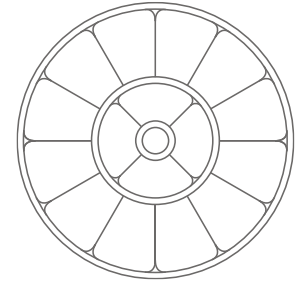
Most people die before the vitality of the body is exhausted. It is due to many causes of which one is **the destiny prepared by past lives; another the inner purpose or utility of the present life being completed**—but these are subtle and secret reasons—others, **accident, violence or other causes, are only an exterior machinery.**

“This terrestrial evolutionary working of Nature has a double process:



- 1) there is an outward visible process of physical evolution with birth as its machinery, — for each evolved form of body housing its own evolved power of consciousness is maintained and kept in continuity by heredity;
- 2) there is, at the same time, an invisible process of soul evolution with rebirth into ascending grades of form and consciousness as its machinery.”

# The Mother on Death and Immortality



"What is death?..."

Death is the decentralization of the consciousness contained in the body's cells.

With a whole world of perceptions at the same time (*Mother makes a gesture around her*), like a general terrestrial consciousness, with examples showing that it's only when the consciousness contained in the cells is decentralized that one is dead. Otherwise, nothing, not even the heart stopping, can cause death.

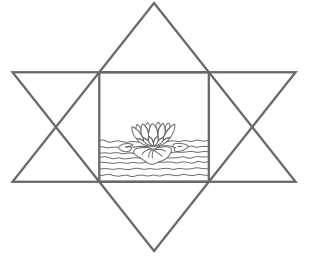
Naturally, this decentralization stems **from innumerable causes, but they are causes we might call psychological.** And the cells contained in the body, or composing the body, are held in form by a centralization of the consciousness in them, and as long as that power of concentration is there, the body cannot die. It's only when the power of concentration disappears that the cells scatter. And then the body dies.

The habitual concentration of Nature (produced by Nature) is a **MECHANICAL** concentration which is subject to all sorts of mechanical laws too, but... (*Mother reads out her note*) Here is what came:

The very first step towards immortality is to replace the mechanical centralization by a willed centralization. ...which comes from **the inner Presence**, which means that through its will, **the divine Presence concentrates the cells.**



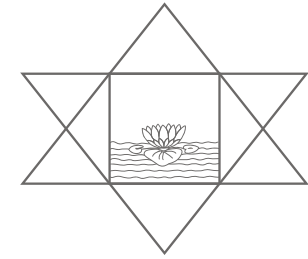
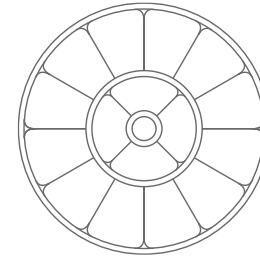
# Sri Aurobindo on the Journey of Life



In a general way, a life is only one brief episode in a long history of spiritual evolution in which the soul follows the curve of the line set for the earth, passing through many lives to complete it.

It is an evolution out of material inconscience to consciousness and on towards the divine Consciousness, from ignorance to divine Knowledge, from darkness through half-lights to Light, from death to Immortality, from suffering to the Divine Bliss. Suffering is due first to the Ignorance, secondly to the separation of the individual consciousness from the Divine Consciousness and Being, a separation created by the Ignorance—when that ceases, when one lives completely in the Divine and no more in one's separated smaller self, then only suffering can altogether cease.

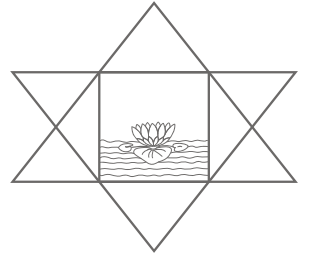
# The Stages of Integral Yoga



There is in us a region which is above space and time, immobile, immutable, at first; it does not participate in the waves of emotions and thoughts. The first step is to centre one's consciousness in this region and keep it there: this is mukti. In us, beyond our personality, the Purusha is seen, with many attributes which are successively unveiled.

- First of all, he appears as the witness of actions and sensations, untouched, unalterable.
- Then he manifests as the giver of sanctions: he approves or refuses his consent to a movement of Prakriti: desire or thought or even action. When such an order is given, as for instance, the refusal to take part in a certain emotion, though the past is yet strong, the being turns away from that emotion.
- Then, Purusha is the Knower and in him is the knowledge. This knowledge has several forms: the lowest is intuition, then comes the knowledge in unity. In any case, the senses are no longer avenues of knowledge: it comes directly.
- Finally, Purusha reveals himself as Ishwara, the Lord. Governing and acting through his instruments he at last takes his kingdom in his hands.

# Preparation for a peaceful Death

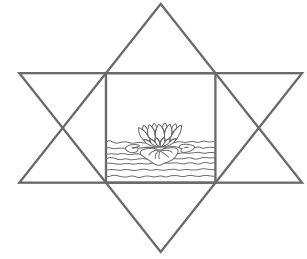


- Death is not at all what you believe it to be. You expect from death the neutral quietness of an unconscious rest. But to obtain that rest you must prepare for it.
- When you die you lose only your body and at the same time the possibilities of relation with and action on the material world. But all that belongs to the vital world does not disappear with the material substance; all your desires, attachments, cravings persist with the sense of frustration and disappointment, and all that prevents you from finding the expected peace. To enjoy a peaceful and eventless death you must prepare for it. And the only effective preparation is the abolition of desires.

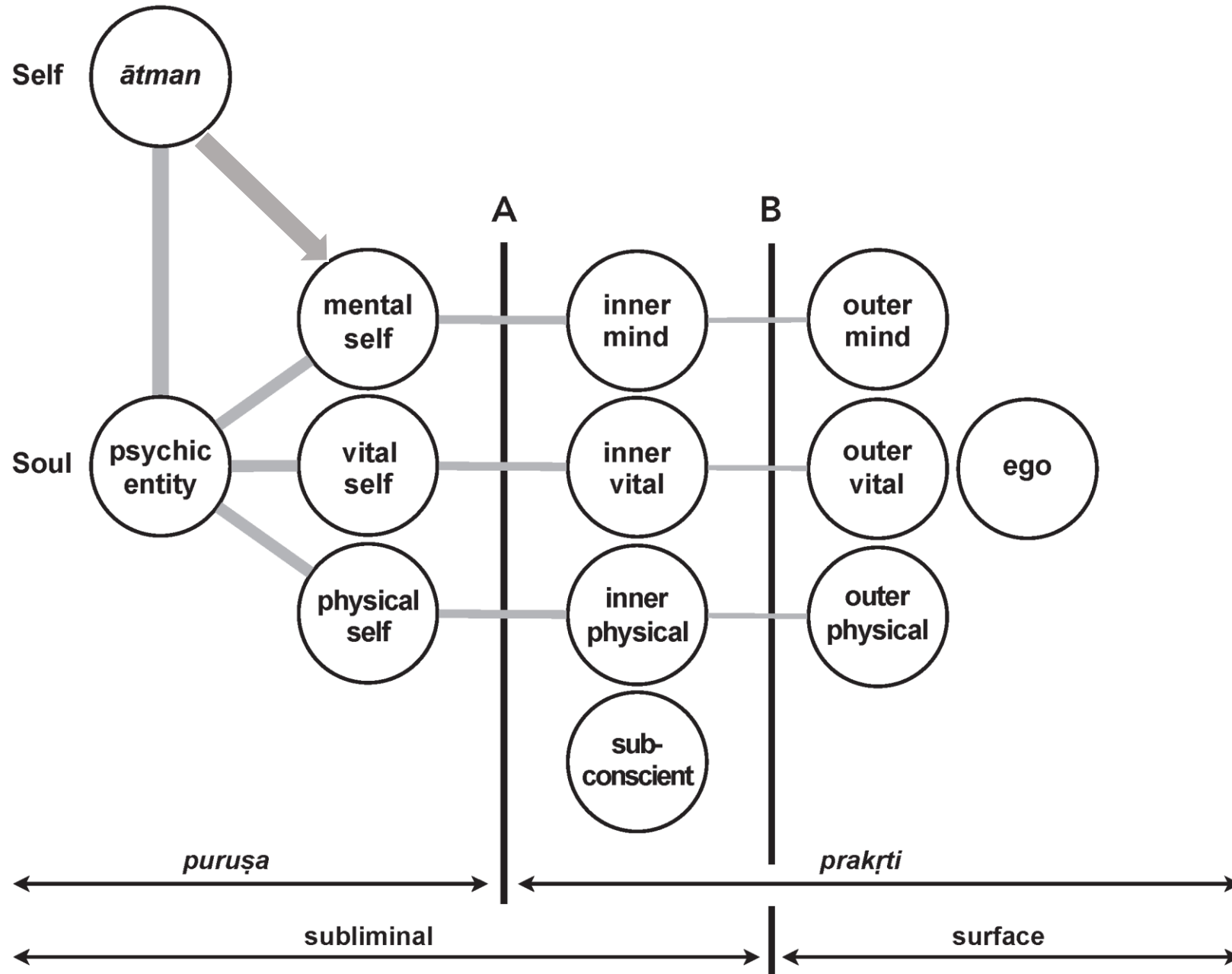
# Preparing next incarnation

Besides, during its previous incarnation, before going away, before leaving the earth-atmosphere, usually as a result of the experience it had in the life that is coming to an end, **the soul chooses** more or less—not in all details but broadly—**the conditions of its future life.**

# The Journey after Death



- There is after death a period in which one passes through the vital world and lives there for a time. It is only the first part of this transit that can be dangerous or painful; in the rest one works out, under certain surroundings, a remnant of the vital desires and instincts which one had in the body. As soon as one is tired of these and able to go beyond, the vital sheath is dropped and the soul, after a little time needed to get rid of some mental survivals, passes into a state of rest in the psychic world and remains there till the next life on earth.
- One can help the departed soul by one's good will or by occult means if one has the knowledge. The one thing that one should not do is to hold them back by sorrow for them or longings or anything else that would pull them nearer to earth or delay their journey to their place of rest.
- It may happen to some not to realise for a little time that they are dead, especially if the death has been unforeseen and sudden, but it cannot be said that it happens to all or to most—some may enter into a state of semi-unconsciousness or obsession by a dark inner condition, created by their state of mind at death, in which they realise nothing of where they are etc., others are quite conscious of the passage.
- It is true that the departing being in the vital body lingers for some time near the body or the scene of life very often for as many as eight days and in the ancient religions mantras and other means were used for the severance. Even after the severance from the body a very earthbound nature or one full of strong physical desires may linger long in the earth atmosphere up to a maximum period extended to three years. Afterwards it passes to the vital worlds, proceeding on its journey which must sooner or later bring it to the psychic rest till the next life. It is true also that sorrow and mourning for the dead impedes its progress by keeping it tied to the earth-atmosphere and pulling it back from its passage.



# The Triple Worlds of the Veda

	<i>World</i>	<i>Svar</i>	<i>Supermind</i>
Mental Mind	Tisro dyavah		<i>Triple Status of</i>
Vital Mind			
Physical Mind			
Mental Vital	Tri rajamsi	Tri rocana	1 UNITY
Vital Vital			
Physical Vital			
Mental Physical	Tisro bhumih		2 One in Many and Many in One
Vital Physical			
Physical Physical			
			3 MANY