The lower ones are attained by action, but the higher ones by worship, adoration and knowledge. The higher does one reach, the more one comes near to one’s own self. That is the reason why actions become less and less applicable as the soul rises higher and higher. The more distant is the object of one’s quest, the greater is the effort that is needed in the acquisition of it. The nearer it comes, the lesser is the effort, both in quantity and quality, so that, when it becomes almost inseparable from oneself, the question of action does not arise. There is then an awakening, an understanding and an enlightenment by which one realises one’s affinity with the object of one’s attainment; this is called knowledge. By worships or adorations, which are also meditations at the lower levels, and are called Upasanas or devotions, one gains entry into those higher realms due to the force of thought which is exerted upon those ideals which one wishes to attain. Yatha yatha upasate tatha bhavati: As you contemplate, so you become. And that also is the nature of the object which you attain. Thus it is that knowledge is regarded as the highest of achievements, and the divine regions, the celestial realms transcending even the paradise of angels, are attainable not by ordinary action, but by deep contemplation, Upasana, worship, which is the knowledge spoken of in this section.

FATHER’S BENEDICTION AND TRANSMISSION OF CHARGE

17. athatah samprattih. yada praisyan manyate, atha putram atha, tvam brahma tvam yajnah, tvamIoka iti. sa putrah pray aha, aham brahma,
How does a person at the time passing from this world transfer his powers to his own son, or immediate successor? By means of contemplative rituals, is what is mentioned in this section. At that time a contemplative or a meditative ritual is performed by the application of thought, together with the recitation of certain *Mantras*. “Whatever I have been in this world, that you have to be, after I leave this world. Whatever I have learnt in this world, that knowledge should continue in your being, after I leave this world. Whatever sacrifices I have been performing in this world, those sacrifices you perform by means of a continuation of the tradition, after I pass away from this world.” This is the transference ritual which is called *Sampratti*, meaning the transference of power when one feels that the time has come for one to leave this world. Here is not merely a transference of one’s legacy - physical, social and psychological - but also a communion of spirits, which one achieves for the purpose of the attainment of higher worlds. That it is a spiritual and not merely a temporal ritual can be seen from the way its consequences are described in the following passage. The senses, the mind and the intellect, the entire subtle body of the father is gradually communicated to its own sources by means of these meditations. It is not just a ritual of chants, but one of an augmenting of thought, which is the same as contemplation. The tradition is that one’s progeny is a continuation of oneself in every respect. The son is not an individual independent of the father in a social sense, merely. It is a spiritual relation that obtains between the father and the son, so that the endowments of the father are transferred to the personality of the son; and the future blessedness of the father is insured by the conduct and performances of the son. Because of the fact that the son can free the father from limitations such as those of the senses and the mind and of his actions in this world, he is called *Putra*, which means to say one who frees the father from limitation or restriction and bondage. When this rite is performed, when the ritual takes place, when this meditation is affected, the dying person’s personality is supposed to expand into a larger dimension, and then it is that the senses return to their sources, by means of which one regains the status one had in the higher regions. Whatever there be unstudied (*Brahma*), unperformed (*Yajna*), or unattained (*Loka*) that the son completes by his life and conduct.

18. prthivyai cainam agnes ca daiva vag avisati, sa vai daiva vag, yaya yad yad eva vadati, tad tad bhavati.
The speech becomes divine, the mind becomes divine, and the Prana also becomes divine thereby, due to which the capacity of spoken words increases infinitely, because the limitations imposed upon speech by its connection with the present body are lifted on account of the practice of this meditation. Thus, here, the divine speech enters the person, which means to say that speech becomes an expression of a cosmic intention. *Sa vai daiva, vag, yaya yad yad eva vadati, tad tad bhavati:* What do you mean by divine speech as differentiated from ordinary speech? Generally, words correspond to existent facts. We speak whatever is there in fact in the external world. When our expression corresponds to facts or situations in the world outside, then that form of speech is called true speech, otherwise it is false speech. The words, the utterances or the expressions should correspond to existing situations or things in the world. But, in divine speech, it is the other way round. Whatever one speaks should materialise as a fact in the other external world. The objects outside, the conditions or situations, are determined by the words uttered, not the reverse, as is the case with ordinary speech. When an expression takes place or a word is uttered or something is said by a person, that materialises on account of the cosmic power being there behind the word, which is also behind the object in regard to which the expression is made. There is a correspondence established, therefore, between the word uttered and the object to which it is directed. The correspondence is established by a common substratum which is behind the speech as well as the object. Such is the power of affiliation with superior dimensions of a more inclusive nature.

19. divas cainam adityac ca daivam mana avi’sati, tad vai daivam mano yenanandy eva bhavati, atho na socati.

While characteristic of true speech is correspondence to fact, the essential nature of mind is satisfaction, or joy. Just as speech becomes divine in the case of a person who thus meditates, and it corresponds to fact not because the fact determines it but it determining the fact, so is the case with the mind of this person which is lifted from the limitations of the body. It becomes happy not because of the acquisition of an object from outside, but because of the satisfaction arising from correspondence or coordination with existent things. This is the character of the divine mind. Its joy is the outcome of an enhanced form of being.

20. adbhyas cainam candramasas ca daivam prana avisati; sa vai daivah prano, yah samcarams casamcarams ca na vyathate, atho na risyati. sa evam-vit sarvesam bhutanam atma bhavati. yathaisa devata, evam sah. yathaitam devatam sarvani bhutany avanti, evam haivam-vidam sarvani bhutany avanti. yad ukim cemah prajah socanti, amaivasam tad bhavati, punyam evamum gacchati. na ha vai devan papam gacchati.

When this meditation is practised, the Prana also gets harmonised with the cosmic Prana even as it is the case with the speech and the mind of a person. Then the divine Prana enters the person. The Sutra-Atman takes possession of the individual, and he becomes the vital force, or energy, of everything that
moves and does not move, visible or invisible. And then one is not affected by what happens anywhere in the world. The Prana of an individual is subject to limitations on account of the presence of persons and things outside. But in the case of the Sutra-Atman, or the cosmic Prana, such limitations are not effective, because the Sutra-Atman is not an individualised Prana. It is that which exists in every one uniformly. On account of this reason, the Prana does not exist there merely as a function of an individual, but as the Self of the person. The universal Prana is indistinguishable from the universal Self. It is more in harmony with the universal Self than is the individual Prana with the individual self, because of the fact that body-consciousness which is the characteristic of an individual is absent in the cosmic condition. Therefore, the Upanishad says, na vyathate atho na risyati - there is no pain by increase or decrease through inspiration and expiration. There is no question there of breathing, as we do with the breath here. It is uniform energy. We do have that energy within us, no doubt, but it expresses itself in activity as a fivefold function including respiration. But there, in the cosmic state, it is not merely an activity; it is not a function. It has no work to do in the form of respiration - inhalation and exhalation. It exists as an expression of the Vaisvanara Atman, the Supreme Self. One becomes the very existence of all things - sa bhutanam atma bhavati.

Yathaisa devata evam sah yathaitam devatam sarvani bhutny avanti: We have to take care of ourselves with great effort. You know very well how cautious we have to be in protecting ourselves from external onslaught. Because we are not friendly with the world, the world also is not friendly with us. So, we have to guard ourselves by buildings, guns, swords, etc. But here, instead of your protecting yourself against the operation of external existences, the external existences automatically become forces, which guard you. The world protects you because you are harmonious with it. Every fear is due to isolation of oneself from prevailing conditions, and fear arises on account of the presence of something with which we are not in harmony. There is a disharmony between ourselves and the environment outside. On account of this, there is fear, fear that the environment may inflict pain on us. So we take extra steps to see that we are guarded well. The Prana is to be protected. We save our lives at any cost; but no such effort is needed here when you reach this blessed state. The world becomes your friend, and so it guards you, as each one guards one’s own self. You know how much love one has for one’s self; it is indescribable. There is nothing equal to the love that one evinces towards one’s own self. That love or affection, that regard which one has for oneself, will be shown to this person who has become the Self of all, so that each one will regard this person who has realised this state as equal to his own, or her own, or its own self. Everything protects him; everything takes care of this condition because it is one with the supreme condition. You need not have to take care of yourself. There are forces which will spontaneously function for your sake - sarvani bhutany avanti.

Yad u kim cemah prjahsocanti, amaivasam tad bhavati: In the case of ordinary people who are bound to the body, what happens is that their sorrows are their own properties - my sorrow is mine; your sorrow is yours; you will not
take my sorrow and I will not take your sorrow. This is the case with the common mass. Now the doubt arises in the mind: if one becomes the Self of all, will he also share the sorrows of everyone, so that the realised soul will be an ocean of sorrows? Well, he will be much worse than the ordinary individual who has to share just his own sorrow. Is this that state? Is it an undesirable condition, where we are going to share the sorrows of everyone, such that we cannot tolerate it at all? No, says the Upanishad. It is not like that. Sorrows arise on account of affirmation of individuality. It is your attachment to your own personality and body, and the segregation of your personality from others, that is the cause of your sorrow. Such a situation cannot arise here. *Punyam evanum gacchati. na ha vai devan papam gacchati:* There is no such thing as evil, sin, grief, sorrow, suffering in that realm of blessedness, which is universal being. The very term ‘universal’ implies the absence of externality, and, where there is no such thing as the external, there cannot be any influence from outside. And where such influence is absent, sorrow also cannot be caused by factors outside, not merely from outside but also from inside, because internal sorrow is also a kind of reaction that we set up in respect of abhorrent externals. As the externals do not exist, no internal reaction in respect of externals exists, and the external cannot inflict sorrow upon one. The question of sorrow, thus, does not arise here. It is all blessedness, virtue, righteousness. It is the justice of God that operates here, the law of the universe, and not the idiosyncracies of the individual. The celestials, by which, here, we have to understand the realised souls, are free from subjection to grief of any kind.

**THE UNFAILING VITAL FORCE**

21. *athato vrata-mimamsa. praja-patir ha karmani sasrje, tani srstani anyo’ nyenaspadhanta. vadisyamy evaham iti vag dadhre; draksyamy aham iti caksuh; srosyamy aham iti srotram; evam anyani karmani yatha karma; tani mrtyuhr sramo bhutva upayeme; tany apnot; tany aptva mrtyur avarundha; tasmat sramyaty eva vak, sramyati caksuh, sramyati srotram, athenam eva napnot yo’ yam madhyamah pranah. tani jnatum dadhirere. ayam vai nah srestho yah samcarams casacarams ca na vyathate, atho na risyati, hantasyaiva sarve rupam asameti: ta etasyaiva sarve rupam abhavan, tasmad eta etainakhyayante prana iti. tena ha vava tat kulam acaksate, yasmin kule bhavati ya evam veda. ya u haivam vida spardhate, anususyati, anususya haivantato mrityate, iti adhyatmam.*

This is a new subject into which we are entering, though not entirely new, because we have had a study of this kind earlier in the beginning of the First Chapter. But, the Upanishad repeats this theme, again, in a more concise form, the theme being the position of the senses and the mind in the universal state, as distinguished from their condition in the individual form. This subject is discussed by means of an anecdote. The great Creator, *Prajapati,* projected the senses and the mind. He diversified Himself into the form of this world, and each form He took became an individual by itself. Each individual felt a necessity to come in contact with other individuals. The necessity of one individual to come in
contact with another brought forth another necessity as a corollary thereof, namely, the projection of certain instruments of contact. How can one come in contact with another? There must be a means of communication. The means are the senses and the mind. The diversification of Prajapati into the universe of manifestation implies the individuality of these parts and the need of each one to contact others, as well as the rise of the senses and the mind. There was the world of senses and of meditation.

These senses are presided over by certain deities. On account of there being different deities, or divinities, superintending over different senses, there is likely to be a tendency on the part of the senses to assert themselves as independent functions. Just as every part of the Creator who diversified Himself into the many asserted itself as an individual, there could be a subsequent situation when each sense organ also may assert itself. And, it did so, actually. The senses asserted themselves independently, so that the eye cannot hear, the ear cannot see, and so on. There is no mutual give-and-take spirit between the senses. The harmonisation of the functions of these senses has to be effected by another principle altogether. The senses themselves cannot do this. As we require a Governor or an Administrator to harmonise the individualities of persons working in an organisation of people, to avoid mutual conflict and chaos, there is a need for a synthesising principle within us, without which each sense would work in its own way and there would be no co-ordination of one with the other. So, with a story the Upanishad tells us that the senses asserted themselves. The eye said “I alone can see; I go on seeing. Nobody is like me. Ear, you cannot see. You are blind.” Thus, the ego entered the eye. The ear said “Who are you? I can hear, but you cannot hear. My superiority is very clear.” Likewise the other senses also started asserting themselves. “I do this but you cannot do. So, you are inferior.”

The speech started speaking. It said “I can speak endlessly.” The eye said “I can endlessly see.” The ear said “I can endlessly hear. Who can prevent me from doing this?” Egoism entered them all. And, what is the consequence of this sort of egoistic affirmation? Death possessed them!

Everyone who has this self-affirming ego shall be possessed by death. Death is the law of God operating in a world of egoistic individualities. It is not some terrible spectre in the form of a Yama, or Yama-dutas that come and threaten us. The law of the universal justice raises the rod of punishment upon the ego which has sprung as an upstart in this creation. The ego has really no place to exist, but, somehow, it has usurped the place of cosmic powers and asserted its own independence, a false freedom, a vain glorious existence. Death operating and affecting individuals means the universal law acting in an inexorable manner, not in the form of a punishment or as a wreaking of vengeance upon anybody, but as an automatic function of the balancing power of the universe. Such a law took possession of the senses. So, the eye went on seeing, but got tired. How, long can you go on seeing? The ear went on hearing, but got fed up. It could not hear anymore. The speech gets exhausted by endlessly speaking. They get fatigued on
account of excessive activity. This fatigue that comes upon onself is a tendency to exhaustion, debility and destruction. This is the incoming of death.

The Upanishad says that everything sensuous was affected by death, but that hidden Power, the central Prana within, works as the force of the soul. It is the soul within us that can be equated with the Cosmic Prana, in the end, which is not affected by death. Everything that is personal is subject to destruction, not the soul which cannot be so destroyed. That alone remained unaffected by the sway of death, because the soul does not assert itself egoistically. The ego is an external function; it is not the soul, or the essence of being in us. This essence in us is not affected, but the external appearance in the form of the ego, the senses, etc. was overpowered. Therefore, when one takes resort to the soul i.e., this central Prana, one neither increases nor decreases, neither exerts nor feels grief in the mind. That is the permanent nature in us, which temporal forms and influences cannot touch.

The senses conferred among themselves and decided: “There is no use of our asserting independence like this. Without this central being we are nowhere. So, let us collaborate with this central function, the Prana, the soul force.” Etasyaiva sarve rupam abhavan: Then they acted in conformity with this divine force. Therefore, the senses also are called Prana, in the language of the Upanishad - tasmad eta etainakhyayante prana iti.

Tena ha vava tat kulum acaksate, yasmin kule bhavati: Just as the head of a family rules the tradition of a family, the central Prana rules the tradition of the senses. The surname of a person who is leading the family is continued by the progeny and everyone who comes afterwards. Likewise, in a similar tradition, as it were, the term Prana is applied to the senses also, in the Upanishads particularly, because they follow this central Prana, work together with it and harmonise themselves with it. Therefore, we do not see any conflict of sensations in one’s personality. The eyes see, but do not hear; the ears hear, but do not see, and so on, but, yet, we are able to synthesise their functions in ourselves. It is the central ‘I’ which feels, “I see,” and “I am the same person that hears also,” and “I can taste and smell and touch” etc. The differentiated functions of the senses are brought together into a synthesis by an eternal principle within, which is the Prana-Sakti, representative, or the ambassador, we may say, of the Cosmic Prana, the Self in all.

Ya u haivam vida spardhate, anususyati: One person who is a meditator on the cosmic Prana has no opponents. But, if anyone opposes that person, this opponent shall dry up, says the Upanishad. One who meditates on the Universal Prana has no enemies. He does not oppose any person, or any thing. If, by any indiscretion, someone else starts opposing this person, that person shall not survive any more. Antato mriyate: He dries up and perishes. So, hate not, oppose not, insult not, or harm not a being who is in union with cosmic forces. Iti adhyatmam: This is an anecdote in respect of our internal function the senses.
Now, the same analogy is continued in respect of the higher forces called divinities, or deities, Devatas, who superintend over the senses. Athad-hidavatam: jvalisyam avaham ity agnir: In the same way as the senses started asserting their independence, the deities also began asserting themselves. Agni, the deity of fire, who is the presiding divinity over speech, began asserting himself. “I shall burn always.” The sun asserted himself, “I shall shine forever.” So was the case with other celestial divinities, also.

You know the story occurring in the Kena Upanishad, where the gods are said to have won victory over the demons. Agni, Vayu, Indra, all these gods, very self-conscious, thought they had won victory over the enemies. Each one feels a sort of pride when he wins victory even in small acts; one need not go so far as victory in a big war. When you succeed in anything, there is a little of pride. There can be even what is called spiritual pride, sometimes. These divinities had some ego-sense in them. The Great Being, the Master of all things, understood this. “I see! They think they have won victory in battle. Let me teach them a lesson.” The Absolute itself took a form, a mysterious, inscrutable shape and presented itself before the gods in heaven. It was a fearsome funny figure, indeed. The gods were surprised to see this majestic, gigantic being confronting them in the paradise, as if it cared not a fig for anyone. They were in consternation, and did not know what was this that was there, threatening them. Indra told the deities, “Go, and find out what this is.” He sent Agni, first. “You are a very powerful hero. Nobody can stand before you. You can burn the whole world if you so wish. Go and see who is this sitting here.” Agni rushed forth and looked up. A giant was seated there. The giant Yaksa asked Agni, Who are you?” Agni said, “I am the deity of fire, Agni-Devata. I am a celestial in heaven.” “O, I see, you are that,” said the Yaksa. “What can you do?” Agni said, “I can burn anything. I can reduce to ashes the world in a second.” “Such a power you have? Good!” The Yaksa placed a piece of dry straw in front, and said, “You burn this.” To be challenged thus was naturally a kind of insult to the great power who could burn the world to ashes. To be told, “You burn a little piece of straw,” was beyond the limit of tolerance, Agni was irritated at this confrontation and, with his indomitable force, dashed at it to burn it, but could not succeed. He could not even touch it! Though he applied all his burning power, the straw could not be shaken. Agni could not understand what had happened. He felt defeated and would not wish to return to the gods announcing his shame. He merely went and told Indra, “I do not know who it is. I went and saw; I cannot understand who it is.” The great one did not like to say that he was defeated. “Please send somebody else.” “What is the matter?” wondered Indra. “Vayu, you go.” Vayu felt very well. He could blow up anything. Vayu went, and the Yaksa asked, “Who are you?” “I am Vayu the wind-god.” “What can you do?” “I can blow up anything, even the entire earth which I can throw off its orbit.” “I see, you can blow away anything. Blow off this straw.” He kept the straw there. Vayu felt insulted, indeed, and then rushed forward to blow up that little piece of grass. But he could not move it. It was there like an iron hill; and much more than that. The grass was more than a match for the gods! Vayu felt defeated. He came back to Indra and said, “I cannot understand what this terrible thing is. You may go and find out.” When Indra himself came,
that Divinity vanished out of sight. Why he vanished is a different matter, which we shall see in another context.

So, the story is that the gods also can feel themselves a little important, but this is not the truth, narrates the Upanishad. There is no such thing as individual importance, finally, either in the case of the senses or the divinities, much less with ordinary mortals.

22. athadhidaivatam; jvalisyamy evaham ity agnir dadhre; tapsyamy aham ity adityah; bhasyamy aham iti candramah; evam anya devata yathadevatam; sa yathaisam prananam madhyamah pranah, evam etasam devatanam vayuh, nimlocanti hy anya devatah, na vayuh. saisastamita devata yad vayuh.

The deities, Agni, Aditya, Candra, and the others, are only an expression, a functional part of the Universal Cosmic Prana. That being alone is free from the tendency to self-assertion. Everyone else has this urge to assert oneself. Neither Aditya, nor Agni, nor Candrama can be said to be independent deities. They are all His names. They do not shine of their own accord. They are supplied with energy from elsewhere. Bhayad agnis tapati, bhayat tapati suryah, says the Upanishad. Fire burns due to fear of this Supreme Being, as it were; Sun shines due to fear, Wind blows due to fear, Rain falls due to fear of this Being. There is the uplifted thunderbolt of the eternal Reality without fear of which nothing would be in harmony in this world. The universal justice is there like a raised terror. One who knows this terror of the Absolute, which is the eternal justice prevailing everywhere, he alone is free from this devilish urge to assert oneself, the ego, which is the Asura in everyone.

So it is the Cosmic Being alone, the Prana-Sakti, the Sutra-Atman, Isvara, who is real. Everyone else is just partaking of a facet or an aspect of this Divinity even when one feels an importance in respect of oneself.

23. athaisa sloko bhavati: yatas codeti suryah astam yatra ca gacchati, iti pranad va esa udeeti, prane`stam eti, tam devas cakrire dharma sa evadya sa a svah.
iti yad va ete’murhy adhriyanta tad evapy, adya kurvanti. tasmad ekam eva vratam caret, pranyac caiva, apanyac ca, nen ma papma mṛtyur apnuvad iti; yady u caret samapipayiset teno etasyai devatayai sayujyam salokatam jayati.

The sun rises and sets on account of the operation of this Cosmic Prana. If the planets move round the sun due to the gravitational pull of the latter, who assists the sun to occupy its position? The sun also has a status in the astronomical universe. It has an orbit of its own. And, likewise, everything has a function and an orbit and a place in this universal structure. There is a harmonious rotation and revolution of everything in respect of everything else. There is a relativity of motion in all the universe. How comes this relativity of
motion? Why should there be this harmony? Why this following the course, or
the orbit of each one? Why not jump from one course to another? Why does this
not happen? Because there is that Power which holds everything in unison. Why
does not one hand of a person fight with his other hand? You have never seen
your right hand or left hand fighting with each other, because there is something
in you, the ‘you’ which keeps both these in position, in harmony. So is everything
in creation held in harmony by this invisible Being, which is the God of the
universe. On account of its working alone is it that the sun rises and sets; else he
could go anywhere. There is that Law, that Righteousness, which has its own
principle of working, of which no one has knowledge, but without which no one
can exist. *Tam devas cakrere dharmam:* That is the *Dharma*, or the Supreme
justice which every god has to obey, to which every individual bows, and every
sense-organ works in accordance with it. That law is unamendable. It is an
eternal constitution. It was, it is and it shall be the same at all times - *sa eva adya
sa usvah.*