

## The Kena Upanishad and Savitri (Lecture 4)

### Day 3 (morning session)

Kena Upanishad, Third Part

11. Then they said to Indra, "Master of plenitudes, get thou the knowledge, what is this mighty Daemon." He said, "So be it." He rushed upon That. That vanished from before him.

12. He in the same ether came upon the Woman, even upon Her who shines out in many forms, Uma daughter of the snowy summits. To her he said, "What was this mighty Daemon?"

Fourth Part

1. She said to him, "It is the Eternal. Of the Eternal is this victory in which ye shall grow to greatness." Then alone he came to know that this was the Brahman.

2. Therefore are these gods as it were beyond all the other gods, even Agni and Vayu and Indra, because they came nearest to the touch of That...

One could say a few things about the very temporary and human activity that goes on, while we are in an environment which is currently full of another kind of energy completely. And it is that which is important. And the fact that it is here is extremely important. That we are here with it is inexpressably important. We have the opportunity to learn something from that energy, that presence, that stillness, which could be lasting - Much different from an hour of speaking or reading. Here definitely it is something accessible. But the message is that it can be permanent in every environment and little by little influence the way speech, thought, relations, practical actions, take place, in ways that we cannot predict. The question is always: do we dare to allow those things to be done differently? The stillness which comes through *Savitri*, which some have really entered into and everyone has had a taste of, - the challenge of this Yoga is to go through that stillness to another kind of energetic, another kind of activity.

We are talking and that is what we always do: people this morning were all obviously involved in their personal narratives. Some people practiced asana diligently. Last night there was a demonstration of a professional healing art; quite informative and sensitive, and there was a conversation about that. And in all of those activities that we are experiencing there is something we have heard about – the pranic field, but we can see that in all of those activities there was no consciousness of the pranic field really. SA has told us that the only way to be conscious of it is to be in a state of yogic stillness that is completely other than the states that we are so practiced in. So, basically we cannot be conscious of it unless we endure a kind of transformation and become other than human. That is to say, other than in our habitual, well-established, well-known, proficient way of living. All of that is good, but it is not what we are concerned with at this point. We are concerned with a transition into another field and consciousness which is different from all of that. It underlies all of that in a mysterious way, but to become conscious of it implies a transition into what I think may be called the higher intuition. The higher intuition is capable of knowing directly the pranic field. And in that field, I have an intuition that there is not this drawing back into a relationship between the self and the other. The self and the other is an extraordinarily unique formation of that field, but as long as we are conscious of that difference - and are from our own point of view expressing it, when we are preparing the fruit or massaging the muscles or speaking about our professions and habits and problems – those are all individualizations or forms of that field, but in the material-vital-mental constructs that are so familiar to us already. But the idea of Yoga is that we can step back entirely from all of those structures, and constructs, and dynamics and enter into the pranic field itself and have access to unlimited energy and a direct perception, and

response that is precisely appropriate to the object. The idea of the *prana* that we have heard is that the information of the field comes in to all of us all the time, gets organized as the inner consciousness of that object in the field, and that awareness is integrated in our whole being (we are physically, vitally, mentally receptive of the food, forms, beauty, smells), those become part of us because we are in that field and we are not really different from their reception, and that distribution of energy gets raised to a point of the possibility of the will responding appropriately to the field. That response becomes speech, or anger, or healing energy, or whatever is appropriate to the field. I believe that if we are connected in that way with the field there is no longer healer and object to the healed, since both the art and its object disappear in the field. This would be an intuitive consciousness. Nothing has to be *known* about that! It *is*, the field.

In the teaching of the Upanishad, we are told that this is still not really it. What really is, is the universal, divine principles that create the field itself. That field we are talking about is the *adhibhuta*, which is not what the U is speaking about. That is the *adhidaiva*: the plane of pure principles of energy that create that field. They emanate the *prana*, which forms the objects (of knowledge, sight, smell, hearing, speech) which are the outer expressions of the pranic energy field which is an emanation of the universal divine principles that are rays of the supreme. This Yoga is asking us to move beyond the field of senses and beyond the field of *prana* to the perception of the divine infinite universal energy of life, or of beauty, or truth, or proportionality and mutuality, and meaning, that are necessary principles for all the forms of existence to be what they are.

The way toward that is the stillness, which is not simply stillness but the Brahman itself, from which the gods emanate. Through the forms to the essences to some kind of intentionality that sees the universal symbols, making possible that detailed perfection in all of our activities. A principle and potential in us. We would not be what we are if that was not in us. From the appearance of what we are to the universal power of what we are. By doing that we are connected to something which is eternal and immortal. And in everything. So we enter in the superfield. In that presence of *Savitri*, this energy of speech and light, and seeing and remembering, we are in the field of the goddess. All ceases to be hypothetical, mythological or whatever structure of knowledge we are familiar with and becomes a concrete Presence.

We have a demonstration here, of the ability of the goddess and the human being to interact. The human being is a close enough kin to that flame, Sri Aurobindo says, which we heard yesterday described as the Overmind plane, which gives us the possibility of the deathless Rose or the house of Flame, which are gifts of the gods! This year the Ashram's message from the Mother, last February was: "Agni is the psychic being". A very radical statement. There is a passage in the commentary that is very pertinent in this context of the idea of a god being the ultimate nature of ourselves. There are only the Self and the gods. The nature of ourselves is the gods.

"Agni is the heat and flame of the conscious force in matter, which has built up the universe. It is he who has made life and mind possible. ... in the material universe where he is the greatest deity." That principle is somehow the very basis of our human existence: it is a vibration in us, a direct emanation of the supreme in the material that we are made of. In us it reaches a very high level of organization: life and mind. It is the will in the physical, the will in the vital, the will in the mental, and the pure will itself, the psychic being. These are all energies of Agni. And what is his job? He lames up in us and reconnects with his source. "Especially he is the primary impeller of speech, of which Vayu is the medium." This subtle energy of communication that is able to formulate symbolically what the senses perceive. And Indra is the master of that activity. So Agni, Vayu and Indra are all involved in this activity of speech. One as the illumined mind, one as the relational field, and one as the essential

energy. The pranic field is the gift of Vayu and the illumined mind is the gift of Indra. The heat of conscious force in matter is Agni Jatavedas, the knower of all births. That principle is not only the bringing to birth but the knowing bringing to birth of each thing. "He knows the law of each being." This is symbolic language after all, but it conveys the idea that there are these universal principles in matter, life and mind, which are much vaster than the temporal formations of matter, life and mind that we perceive: they are the universal divine emanations of truth, power, relationship, perfection, beauty, utility, healing, teaching, learning, growing. All of these activities that we indulge in all the time, superficially, are not superficial at all, they are deeply driven forms of activity through which it is possible to know their essences and to be in the presence and knowledge of their divine essences. There is some supreme divine force that is cutting that fruit or stretching that muscle or saying those words. Then, the question is, Can we become conscious of that through those forms and dwell in it? Not just knowing it hypothetically, but consciously dwelling in that field. That field is the *adhidaiva* plane.

He says then, in the commentary on Kena Upanishad, the question, What is the speech of our speech, the life or our life, is answered in Yoga when, "the gods in us are turned towards their source", as we pursue these thoughts and energies, the gods become turned towards their source. And in the last lines of *Savitri* that we heard, as we pursue these questions, we find that all the gods are one in that divine source. In the Overmind plane they become separate individual powers and through their manifestation in forms and each one creates an individual world: the worlds of power, beauty, truth, geometric relationships of perfection, in the *adhibhuta* plane. And the human being is the house of sacrifice to them! We burn those energies and produce the offerings.

To make the transition from our mental, vital, physical evolutionary structures, there is this teaching of Yoga. The essential teaching of the Kena Upanishad comes in the chapter titled "The Parable of the Gods". And another essential chapter called "The Supreme Word" contains the explanation of *sruti*, *drishti*, *smriti* and conveys the idea that above the silence and the thousand-fold word, which is the causal vibration of the manifestation of the cosmos, there is the Supreme. That chapter is very interesting on language and its relationship to mantra and the gods, and the supreme conscious force. The whole idea here in the Kena Upanishad is that we can actually know that highest supreme divine force in which all the powers of existence are contained! Not know it theoretically but directly, we can actually perceive and experience it. "The attainment of the Brahman is our escape from our mortal status into immortality". There is an undying aspect of existence that we can participate in which annuls our mortality, annuls death. It becomes something else, then, "By which we understand not the survival of death but the finding of our true self of eternal being..." Death and birth will still be there, but we enter into the dance of the undying and unborn essence.

"...our true self of eternal being and bliss beyond the dual symbols of birth and death. By immortality we mean the absolute life of the soul as opposed to the transient and mutable life in the body which it assumes by birth and death and rebirth, and superior also to its life as the mere mental being who dwells in the world subjected helplessly to this law of birth and death, or seems at least by his ignorance to be subjected to this and to other laws of the lower Nature. To know and possess its true nature, free, absolute, master of itself and its embodiments is the soul's means of transcendence, and to know and possess this is to know and to possess the Brahman. It is also to rise out of mortal world into immortal world, out of a world of bondage into a world of largeness, out of finite world into infinite world. It is to ascend out of earthly joy and sorrow into a transcendent beatitude. This must be done by the abandonment of our attachment to the figure of things in the mortal world. We must put from us its death and dualities if we would compass the unity and immortality. Therefore it follows that we must cease to make the goods of this world or even its right, light and beauty our object of pursuit; we must go beyond these to a supreme Good, a transcendent Truth, Light and Beauty in which the opposite

figures of what we call evil disappear.” Well, if we cease to make the light and right of this world the object of our pursuit, what do we do?!

By that abandonment of our mental-vital-physical notion of things, we step back into the pure universal energy of light; the source of light, beauty, right, and we dwell in the source itself instead of our temporal ideas and attachments to forms that we already know are distance reflections of those eternal powers and principles. We can dwell in them, not just glimpse them; in that larger energy field of delight and power and right and beauty, by the transformation of the mind, first of all. Because mind is the lower region of that higher energy field. There is universal mind, but above there is universal Overmind, which is here also in this room. And then there is universal Supermind, which is part of the same region. So, Sri Aurobindo say we are kin to the beings of that region, we are mental beings able to ascend by our will into that higher universal field, which is created by the Mahashakti, where all of those energies are one.

Now the really amazing thing that we hear in the Upanishad, and also in *Savitri*, is that when all the gods are turned towards their source (it's a possibility for us to turn the gods in us toward their source, when we abandon attachment to what is here, not by stopping to do what we do, but we can learn to do them so differently that it amounts to something else - moving from the stillness into an action that still remembers the stillness) which is possible through the Ray that we are becoming familiar with, that we feel in this space. That Ray is something that we can tune into anywhere any time: this is the gift of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga: Sri Aurobindo refers to the Ray frequently in *Savitri*, which is not a book or a poem; it is the creative word - vibration - that descends from the Overmind plane into the mental and we feel it, it becomes a Ray and becomes a tangible, liberating universalizing energy in our evolutionary field. By participating in the Ray, by practicing these principles of Yoga, we start to allow that intuitive Ray to replace our mental-vital-physical ordinary behavior. And the Ray becomes more integrated into the mind and life and body.

Savitri is a child of Agni also. In the Lakshmi Tantra we find these powers of the Divine Mother, Surya, Soma, Savitri, Agni. They have different relationships and mantras in different traditions. And they are all emanations of the supreme Mahalakshmi. By inducing this Ray into our lives we become familiar with the other gods: soma the delight, agni the flame. Savitri is mediating this transformation. In Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, this is the direct link to the source. For a long time, it's a relationship between us and her. And then eventually when that Ray is fully integrated it is a relationship between the Ray and its source. There is this wonderful movement in the Kena Upanishad where the gods are turned towards their source and they first find Uma Hemavathi, another name of Mahalakshmi, and she points them to the source. They can't find it themselves. So mythology becomes psychology and that becomes how we comport our lives (...in the Ray or not in the Ray...). In the vital, or the mental, or in the higher intuition which is the connection with the Ray. Through that we can do all our activities without thinking too much about it, because the Ray is the intuitive connection with things. But the transition entails entering the stillness and abandoning systematically a lot of habitual behaviors and risking, daring, to do that!

There is a problem that arises here, which Sri Aurobindo has dealt with: it seems that if Brahman is unknowable, and the Beyond, and we abandon everything and enter into the stillness, and the Brahman is that stillness, don't we lose contact with the world completely and disappear into the zero totality of all? Sri Aurobindo points out that the Vedantic tradition after Buddhism turned more and more towards that ultimate disappearance but, if you look back to the Upanishads and Vedas, that disappearance is not there: it is about realizing that here! The Yogi invoking the descent of Savitri is to reinforce and enhance the possibility of realizing that Brahman here. It is a yogic phenomenon, it's not theoretical, it's

the invocation of the divine Shakti into the stillness. But there is this risk, entering into the stillness and emptiness, the fullness and bliss of the emptiness. And yet it is a risk we have to take, because it is the only way!

If we are really willing and able to enter into the stillness, *Savitri* teaches us that we have to be willing to dwell in that stillness for as long as it takes, because somehow it is the key! “In absolute silence sleeps an absolute power, Awaking it can wake the trance bound soul, And in the Ray reveal the parent sun.” And then all the energy flows in. We see this pattern in *Savitri* repeating itself all the time: the more cantos of *Savitri* we read, the more often we hear it. It is the paradox of the stillness and then the energy.

In our temporal spatial life it turns into a sequence. In itself it is one, beyond time. The timelessness and time are one. This sounds like a paradox, for the mind it is, this yoga is a paradox, an enigma. We can't make up our minds whether we want the ordinary involvement in everything or whether we want to get out of all that into the purity and peace and light and freedom. In life it turns into this constant cycle which is linear in a sense. In Yoga also it has a kind of linear sequence: Sri Aurobindo is always narrating the absolute stillness as a precursor to the absolute force. At some point we are going to learn this! We've heard it so often. And the Ray becomes more and more present for us, which makes the risk less and less risky, actually. At some point we will enter into that Ray deeply and become completely still and its energy will shine forth. And we won't feel that is our personal knowledge, or expertise, or lack, or gain, it will just be that!

(An excerpt from *Savitri*, Book 2, Canto 14 which presents a close parallel to the Upanshad's depiction of Indra's encounter with the Divine Mother)

Along a road of pure interior light,  
Alone between tremendous Presences,  
Under the watching eyes of nameless Gods,  
His soul passed on, a single conscious power,  
Towards the end which ever begins again,  
Approaching through a stillness dumb and calm  
To the source of all things human and divine.  
There he beheld in their mighty union's poise  
The figure of the deathless Two-in-One,  
A single being in two bodies clasped,  
A diarchy of two united souls,  
Seated absorbed in deep creative joy;  
Their trance of bliss sustained the mobile world.  
Behind them in a morning dusk One stood  
Who brought them forth from the Unknowable.  
Ever disguised she awaits the seeking spirit;  
Watcher on the supreme unreachable peaks,  
Guide of the traveller of the unseen paths,  
She guards the austere approach to the Alone.  
At the beginning of each far-spread plane  
Pervading with her power the cosmic suns  
She reigns, inspirer of its multiple works  
And thinker of the symbol of its scene.  
Above them all she stands supporting all,  
The sole omnipotent Goddess ever-veiled

Of whom the world is the inscrutable mask;  
The ages are the footfalls of her tread,  
Their happenings the figure of her thoughts,  
And all creation is her endless act.  
His spirit was made a vessel of her force;  
Mute in the fathomless passion of his will  
He outstretched to her his folded hands of prayer.  
Then in a sovereign answer to his heart  
A gesture came as of worlds thrown away,  
And from her raiment's lustrous mystery raised  
One arm half-parted the eternal veil.  
A light appeared still and imperishable.

(audio file of the reading from *Savitri* not currently available)