

PODCAST 134: “NO TO YES”

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prashanti Sandesh, 134th episode. The title of this talk is, 'No to Yes'. I repeat, ' No, N-O to Yes, Y-E-S. Let me share with you a few points on this topic.

According to our Sanathana Dharma or Vedic literature, the only approach or the right approach is to enquire, examining in depth by first using a negative approach, “no, no, no”, and in that way you will come to know what is the reality with a ‘yes’. It means we begin with ‘no, not this’ and end by experiencing and then declaring what is – ‘yes, it is’. This practice is what is known as or called the theory of negation, or ‘nethi’, N-E-T-H-I, Siddhanta.

Well, broadly speaking, what is the reality? God alone, and nothing else! That God you may call ‘Brahman’ and it is the eternal truth. The principle of Brahman is subtler than subtle, and is supreme and present in the form of the self in all. Therefore, the ultimate reality is Brahman and you are that Brahman: ‘Thou art nothing other than that alone.’ This has got to be understood clearly by following the theory of negation or Nethi Siddhanta. That is why I gave this title to this topic: 'No to Yes'.

It's all a process of inner search. We have got to know what one is 'not' in order to know what one 'is'. So we should know what one is 'not' first, and then ‘what 'is' will be recognized in your experience. In other words, the negative is at the beginning, while the positive is the realization.

I may also say here that though they appear to be opposite poles, the positive and the negative, the negative and the positive are not as contradictory as they seem. In fact, they are complementary because one cannot exist without the other. There cannot be the positive without the negative and vice versa. Good and evil exist, light and dark exist, love and hate exist, and a friend and an enemy exist. So they are not opposites. They are not at opposite poles. In fact, one cannot exist without the other. So the same thing has manifested into polar opposites. As they are from the same existence, so they are complementary and supplementary to each other.

For instance, if you just go back in your memory to think of the story of Jesus Christ, you will come to know this: Jesus was crucified while the one, who betrayed him, Judas, committed suicide very soon after. In other words, when Jesus life ended, then Judas life also ended when Judas committed suicide. In other words, when Jesus left, there was no meaning for Judas to continue to exist. His role became irrelevant. After all, Judas was only the shadow of Jesus. So, Judas cannot exist without Jesus, and Jesus cannot come into this world without Judas. Jesus represents the good, while Judas represents evil. I think this principle is clearly understood. Both exist, the positive and the negative.

Then I'll give you another example. Take the positive as the center and the negative as the boundary or periphery. In other words, the negative surrounds the positive which is at the center. So, to reach the center one has to pass through the periphery

which is the negative. This is what religion is. Religion tells you what you are not. Let us understand that.

What do you mean by 'what you are not'? It means you are not the body, you are not the mind, and you are not the ego. These are all the negative or 'what you are not', which is on the periphery. Then some people may ask, "Why can't we begin with positivity, yes. I begin with the center. I begin with the positive. Why this negative?" Some may question like that.

But if you begin with just the positive or center, you are wrong because your conclusion from your center is just based on imagination. It is not an authentic experience. Even when remaining in the center, the reality, even if you declare that 'I am Brahma', it is only your imagination. It is not your experience, no. It has not come out of your realization, not in the least. Therefore, the Vedanta says to begin with the negative or denial, *nethi, nethi*, 'not that, not that'. They advise to go from the periphery to reach the center.

Some people feel it is better that we repeat the mantra *Aham Brahmasmi*, 'I am Brahman, I am Brahman'. Well, by that method, can you become Brahman? Is it possible? You are suggesting to yourself that you are Brahman and that way you create an illusion. But it is not experienced deeply enough within you.

Suppose you may repeat, 'I am Brahman' repeatedly. But if anyone hits you, you react in whatever manner as an ego, as a mind. You react as an ego. You don't react from the point of your center, from Brahman, no. So what about the Brahman whose name you have been proclaiming till now? When you are hit, your reality is that the ego comes out. Therefore, begin with the negative and end up with the positive.

But we have got some fear towards the negative. Why? Because recognizing the negative may demand renunciation. By this negativity, by pointing out what I am not, I may be destroying something and eliminating something. I may be disidentifying from something and so there is a feeling that 'I am losing'. Then fear encompasses us and a feeling that 'I am poor and poorer' sets in.

Surprisingly enough, we all have a tendency to accumulate and all that has been accumulated naturally will make us feel that 'this is me, this is me'. We identify with more things and persons. As we identify with things and persons, what happens? The periphery widens. The periphery becomes greater and then what happens? With this periphery which is quite broad by our identification, we feel that we are secure. This is a mistaken idea.

Lust means a desire for accumulation. Lust means accumulating more and more. So in other words, I can say that whatever you are attached to becomes a part of you. You are attached so it becomes a part of you. It becomes almost your body. Why? Some people say, "This is my house, this house belongs to me." So naturally I become the house. Then I say, "This is my car." Well, I become the car. "This is my body," so I feel that I am the body. It is nothing but the mind that goes on accumulating.

In other words, the mind accumulates. It is the accumulator in you. But it is the same mind that will help us or serve us as an eliminator. The same mind should be able to eliminate. This is the theory of negation or Nethi Siddhanta or the theory of denial.

At this point, we find a conflict when we get into the field of meditation because meditation demands, meditation aims at 'no', N-O, the no-mind state. It destroys your mind totally. In other words, meditation is a deep freedom from the mind, a deep freedom from the mind. That is meditation.

There is a conflict here. As I said, the mind identifies with persons and things on the one hand. But the same mind, when getting into the arena of meditation, should deny them. It should refuse them all. Yes, because in meditation you go to a no-mind state, where there is no more accumulation. It is the reverse process. So then what happens in this reverse process? 'Oh body! Well, I am not the body. Then the mind, no! Out of the question! I am not the mind. Am I the intellect? No!' That way you go on eliminating. So when we completely finish using this kind of negation, we will get into the positive.

Unless we cross the negative, we cannot get into the process of positivity. We cannot get into that which is really positive. Positive experience is different from just an illusion, hallucination, or imagination, which are none other than the products of negativity. That's what it is.

Now out of this experience you can declare, "I am Brahman." How? By negating and denying all those attachments, by coming out of the periphery or boundary and getting into your center, your reality. There you are! Then you can say, "I am Brahman, out of experience." It's not a mere statement. It's not a mere assumption. It has come out of experience as that conclusion has been reached after this elimination process. Everything else is eliminated while you, the real self, are there, are viewed and experienced. This is what is called a revelation. The self, which is the positive and the center, gets revealed to you. Therefore, we should go on cutting and renouncing or breaking our identities. Then only we can reach the center, the real you or the reality.

Everything from the periphery has got to be eliminated. Then what happens? When the periphery, the circumference, the boundary or identification with the ego, when the mind, persons and things are all eliminated, then what happens? The center only remains without periphery. This is what true meditation is.

So in other words, meditation is first a complete negation, while realization is the positive experienced at the end. So we go negating, eliminating to the extreme. 'I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not the intellect, I am not the senses.' So you go on negating, denying to the extreme, until there remains nothing further to be negated or eliminated. Nothing more remains to be denied.

Then only the self, the center or reality remains. Then you fall into an existential reality. You have transcended the world with that experience. You enter Brahman. Then it only means that you have reached the state of the beyond. You are beyond ordinary reality, yes. You know the negative, yes, because you felt then. And now

you have arrived at the positive. The moment you are at the positive, the center, once you go into meditation, both positive and negative are gone. There is nothing like 'center' and 'periphery' there. They are gone and you are the Parabrahman, the supreme Brahman.

In other words what I mean is once you eliminate the negative or what you are not, which is the periphery or the boundary, you reach the center, the positive, the self, the reality. Then once you reach the center and get into the center or the positive reality, what happens? There is no periphery anymore. It is the center without a periphery. Then what happens? You have gone beyond the periphery and the center. That state is called Parabrahman.

Therefore, from the world which is the periphery or the boundary or the circumference, we reach the center, Brahman. Once the center only remains, after the total elimination of the circumference or periphery, the center becomes non-dual. There is no longer the positive or the negative any longer. There is nothing but the supreme state of non-duality or Brahman, which reaches the transcendental state of Parabrahman. That's transcendence which is beyond duality.

Therefore, we have to begin with the elimination process, with the negatives, and then we enter into the positive that is Brahman. Finally in the third state, both the positive and negative are lost. Both are lost and that is the state of Parabrahman.

After all, everything that you experience out of this negative is just *samsara* or the objective world, which is nothing but *maya* or illusion, full of the world of objects. But we need to go into the subjective world, not the objective world.

What do you mean by 'subjective world'? To know the knower or experience the knower is subjectivity. Once you know the knower, you are neither this nor that. You are consciousness itself. You have transcended both and attained the state of Parabrahman, that beyond-ness, that ultimate, that absolute existence.

So though it may be repetition, I beg your pardon. But for clarity, I am tempted to repeat again because old habits die hard. Being a professor for five decades, I am not able to give up my old habits. So in summary, begin with the negative to attain the positive, and to attain beyond-ness. When both positive and negative are dissolved, they become one, and that is Parabrahman, which transcends all and is expressed in all. It is that. As stated, it is beyond both positive and negative. You are liberated. You are completely free. That is the state of true freedom. Then you are beyond suffering. You are in the state where you will enjoy eternal bliss.

So, in brief, you are renouncing that which you are not. It is the alpha and omega. It is all the beginning and the end. It is the state of Parabrahman. So the topic, 'No to Yes' is sufficiently dealt with I believe.

Thank you for your time. Sai Ram.