

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Q. 279, BOTH THE OPPOSITE POLARITIES ARE NEEDED

Om Sri Sai Ram

Prasanthi Sandesh, Question and Answer session.

Q. 279:

Why does life reflect the principle of dual polarity? Why? It moves in a dual polarity. What could be the reason?

Let us share a couple of thoughts on this.

For any energy to become dynamic or active, an anti-pole is needed, to react with the existing negative or positive energy or polarity. If there is only a negative polarity, electricity will not be created, and if there is only a positive polarity, electricity will also not be created. Also between man and woman, the river of life flows along these two banks or two polarities. Therefore, there is a balance between man and woman

This polarity is very meaningful for meditation because the mind is logical, while life is dialectical. When I say that the mind is logical, this means that the mind moves in a linear manner. It moves in a straight line. When I say that life is dialectical, what it means is that life moves in a different, opposing or contradictory way, not in a straight line.

Mind moves in a simple straight line. It never moves in an opposite way. In fact, it denies the opposite. The mind functions in one polarity. However, life functions in two polarities. Say the mind wants silence, but it has chosen the linear way. So the opposite has to be denied completely.

See the beauty of this: A man living in the Himalayas, seeking silence while avoiding the opposite (human society), he will certainly become dull as if dead. The more he chooses to be silent, the duller he will become because life needs the opposite. Life needs the challenge of the opposite! You will see that there's a different type of silence which exists between two opposites.

The first example given above is a dead silence, like the silence of a cemetery. Certainly a meditative man is silent. But you would not like to be a reclusive yogi. Such a man is absolutely silent. Nobody can disturb him. His mind is absolutely fixed. Even if all around the whole world goes mad, he'll remain in his concentration and be one-pointed. But you'd rather not be a recluse. You would not like to be silent and concentrated or one-pointed if you have to be dead to the rest of life because silence without life is meaningless.

So, the second kind of silence must happen while you are absolutely alive, vital, and bubbling with life and energy. Only then silence is meaningful. But then that kind of silence will have an altogether different quality to it. It will not be dull; it'll be alive. It will be a subtle balance between two polarities.

Such a man who is seeking a balance in life and in silence would like to move both in the market and in the Himalayas. He would like to go to the market to enjoy noise and he'd also like to go to the Himalayas to enjoy silence. He'll create a balance between these two polar opposites and thus he'll remain in that balance. So that kind of balance cannot be achieved through linear efforts, no.

That's what is meant by the Zen technique of 'effortless effort'. It uses contradictory terms like 'effortless effort' or 'gait-less gait' or 'pathless path'. Zen always uses these contradictory terms immediately together to just give you a hint that the process is going to be dialectical and not linear.

However, the opposite (linear) is not to be denied; it is to be absorbed. The opposite should not to be left aside. It has to be used also. Otherwise, if it is left aside, it would always be a burden and will hang on you. So if you don't also absorb the opposite, you'll miss so much. If left aside, it will remain unresolved. On the other hand, if the opposite remains unused, you will miss much valuable insight.

'Effortlessness' means not doing anything, inactivity, *akarma*, A K A R M A.

'Effort' means doing much activity, *karma*, K A R M A.

Please understand, both have to be there! Do much, but don't be the 'doer'. Then you will achieve both. Move in the world, but don't be a part of it. Live in the world, but don't let the world live in you.

Then the contradiction has been absorbed. Then you are not rejecting anything or not denying anything. Then the whole of God (of Divinity) has been accepted. Therefore, that's what has to be done.

'Dynamic meditation' seems to be a contradiction. 'Dynamic' means effort, much effort, absolute effort, while meditation means silence, no effort, no activity. So we can call it a dialectical meditation.

Be so active that all the whole energy becomes a movement. Be active so that there is no energy left static in you. All the energy has been called forth, and nothing is left behind. All the frozen parts of energy are melting, flowing. You are not a frozen thing now as you have become dynamic. You are not a substance now. You are more like energy. You are not material. You have become electrical!

Bring total energy to walk, to be active, to move. When everything is moving, you have become a cyclone. Then become alert. Remember to be mindful, and suddenly in this cyclone, you'll find a centre which is absolutely silent. This is the centre of the cyclone. This centre is you, you as Divinity, you as God.

All around you is activity. Your body has become like an active cyclone. Everything is moving faster and faster. All the frozen parts have melted. You are flowing. You have become like a volcano, a fire, or electricity! But just in the centre, amidst all this movement, there is a still point, a non-moving point.

This still point has not been created. It is there already. You are not to do anything about it. **It has always been there.** It is your very being, the very ground of your being. This is what Hindus have been calling the *atma*, the soul. It is there, but unless your body, unless your material existence becomes totally active, you'll not be aware of it.

With total activity, the totally inactive becomes apparent. The activity gives you a contrast. It becomes the blackboard, and on the blackboard there is this white dot. On a white wall, you cannot see the white dot. But on a blackboard, the white dot suddenly appears to you. Similarly your being becomes apparent against the activity. The white dot represents your centre, your being, while the blackboard represents your activity.

So, when your body has become active, dynamic, in movement, then suddenly you become aware of a point which is absolutely still, the unmoving centre of the whole moving world. That is effortless. No effort is made. No effort is needed. It is simply revealed.

So there is effort on the periphery, but no effort in the centre. There is no movement at the centre, whereas there is movement on the periphery. Stillness is at the centre, while activity is on the periphery. There's always absolute inactivity at the centre. Life lies between these two polarities.

As these are beautiful statements, I am tempted to repeat:

Effort on the part of the periphery, no effort on the part of the centre.

Movement on the periphery, stillness at the centre.

Activity on the periphery, absolute inactivity at the centre.

This may sound difficult to understand, because you may identify yourself with the centre which the Hindus have called *atma*, the soul.

If you identify yourself with the centre which is still, you have again chosen something between the two polarities. You have chosen something and you have rejected something. You have chosen the centre, the stillness, but you have rejected the periphery, the activity.

There's a very subtle eastern discovery, and that is: If you identify yourself only with the still point, then you will never know God. You will know the self but you'll never know God. There are many traditions, particularly Jains, who identify themselves only with the self, so they say that there is no God, and that the self is the only God.

Some Hindus, who have penetrated deeply into themselves, also speak about the still point and about the activity on the periphery. They say that either you are both the stillness and the activity, the centre and the periphery, or you are none. Either you are both or you are none. Please understand that. 'Both', refers to the two poles, the two dialectical poles. They represent the thesis and the antithesis.

These are the two banks and you are somewhere between these two banks. Neither moving nor non-moving, that is the ultimate transcendence. This is what Hindus call the Brahma.

Effort and effortlessness, movement and non-movement, activity and non-activity, matter and the soul -- these dual opposites are the banks, and between these two flows the invisible. These two are visible, and between these two flows the invisible, which is what you are.

Tat tvam asi is the *Upanishadic* statement. That which flows between these two banks, that which cannot be seen, that which is really a subtle balance, with nothing else between these two, *That art thou*. This has been called the Brahma, the Supreme Self.

A balance has to be achieved. This balance can be achieved only when you use both polarities. If you use only one, you will become dead (dull). Many have done that. Even whole societies have become 'dead'. This has happened to India. If we choose one, then an imbalance or lop-sidedness happens.

It happened in India, in the East, that the silent path, the still point was chosen, and the active point was denied. So the whole East has become dull. The sharpness was lost -- the sharpness of intelligence, the sharpness of body, vigour, everything was lost.

The East became more and more dull, ugly. Life was just a burden which ought to be carried out somehow and then dropped. Life was just a duty to be fulfilled, a *karma* to be suffered. It was not an enjoyment, not a vigorous dance, but a dull, lethargic movement.

We'll continue in the next session.

Sai Ram.