

Gangaji Radio

A Conversation With Gangaji Series

Host Hillary Larson

Episode 24

THE GOD VOICE

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[00:05] INTRODUCTION MUSIC

[00:08] HILLARY LARSON, HOST: There's this voice that whispers in our ear. It says things like, you didn't quite do that right. What if people find out who you really are? Sometimes it's subtle, sometimes it's loud. It's different than the one that speaks of casual likes and dislikes. It's harsher than that. It's the judge, it's the critic. When you dissect it though, it's as though some part of the ego has somehow gone rogue.

[00:33] GANGAJI: It's the split from God in saying, well, I will give the orders. I will perfect this human being. I will purify this human being. And that's hell. It's hell.

[00:44] HILLARY: It is hell and do you recognize this voice? It's the one that tells you that who you are or who they are isn't good enough. Gangaji refers to it as the superego. It's the task master who speaks with the authority of God. You should be better, smarter, more enlightened, nicer, happier. When we take a step back and look at it, it's really just pure abuse and it can be shocking to see how we inflict it upon ourselves and in our secret or not so secret opinions of others. So the question is, can we put an end to this beating? Can we give up this stick called the superego, this God voice that tries to convince us that somehow we are flawed? I'm Hillary Larson, and this is *A Conversation With Gangaji*.

[01:37] HILLARY: I've heard from a lot of people that they really appreciate the transparency and the vulnerability in our conversations.

[01:43] GANGAJI: Yes.

[01:44] HILLARY: In the name of that, I wanted to talk about the last conversation that you and I had that hasn't aired, and in fact won't air. We did a show on embracing hell and we did the conversation like three weeks ago and it's for October and what happened for me was just about two or three months prior, you know, I was looking at the list of topics we've had and the conversations we've had. I felt really great about them and the response has been great and this voice came in and it said, how long are you going to be able to keep that up? So I never worry about your end, but I feel you know, that I have a responsibility to hold up my end and so that voice was kind of yakking at me while we were having our conversation and it turned into an interview rather than a conversation and you sent me an email the next day and said that felt like it was lacking something essential and my response inside was, yeah, it was lacking the truth. So because...if I would have just said the truth was I was holding back, everything would have opened, but you know I had myself mentally trapped and so that's this superego that you

speak of and I'm calling it the God voice, the God voice that just has these shoulds and shouldnts and commands and it's brutal.

[03:12] GANGAJI: Yes, it's the jailer. It's brutal because we believe it and I couldn't even get into how it first gets implanted, but when it's useful it's not judgmental. It's simply pointing out errors or mistakes, but when it turns into what is an imitation of God or the real judge, the final judge, it really is the devil's voice because it leads us to hell and we can't get out because that's our jailer. So when you refer to the problem with the last time and your judgment being in the way, it was, it simply kept you from being present and available, because we split off and we're judging and it doesn't work, it doesn't work in any way in relationship. It doesn't work in our lives. It doesn't work in our jobs. It doesn't work in our meditations, because this judge assumes the role of director and it's a mistake. It's just a split of the ego. It's a, it could be the root of all suffering because the ego in itself is simply the identity with this particular form and the survival of this form and so that by itself is really inherently sattvic or transparent, nothing wrong with survival of the form, but once it splits and becomes this director and this judge and this jailer, then it's more than just about survival. It's about how wrong you are or how wrong somebody else is or how bad you are, how bad they are or how evil you are or how evil they are, and this is crazy making and I think it's part of humanities insanity at this point in time individually and collectively.

[05:19] HILLARY: I was thinking about how funny the god voice is, the superego, because I mean it's changed for me over the years, but I was thinking to myself after the exchange that you and I had that if I went out to dinner and I was having a conversation with somebody that was spewing out the snarky remarks to me, I would get up and leave, like I wouldn't listen to it for a moment.

[05:45] GANGAJI: Well, that's good, because that's a step. Many people do listen to snarky remarks from other people and worse, are literally imprisoned by other people in relationships, jobs, or personal relationships and that's what we call abuse and so we learn that abuse is not to be tolerated. We are not to abuse and we're not to tolerate abuse, but we usually overlook this internal abuse because we assume it is the real authority and it's a tyrant and it doesn't serve. We listen to it, we obey it, because we assume that it will help us, and maybe we got it from our parents or teachers, who knows, but it really doesn't help because it just keeps us subservient, it keeps us in a way that we think is being a servant to God or trying to do good, but when we are held by this superego, we are imprisoned and then we don't get to really flourish and we don't get to discover that we do make mistakes and we can make corrections without the abuse that is really from the past and is really unnecessary and yet it can be very scary to let it go.

[07:17] HILLARY: Yeah. It can be very scary to let it go because what I was thinking was in a certain very odd way it seems like we can be attached to this voice of the superego because it seems so concrete whereas what you're speaking of is not concrete, it's nothing.

[07:36] GANGAJI: Oh, it is. It is very concrete. It is concrete because it's always here. It's the only solidity in our world. It is absolutely solid. We just, it's just not objectified. We can't make it an object. So the objects that we make are not concrete at all. They're purely abstract and when we recognize the abstractions of that, then we recognize that it's possible to concretely, practically, day to day discover what is always here and what could be more solid than that?

And this voice that appears to judge emotions or thoughts or actions, and when I say judge, I'm not saying that appears to point out where there are errors, because that's absolutely useful and wonderful and part of being a human. It's the judgment that goes on top of that that we're talking about here, that when we realize that that has taken a place in our mind of God, as you say, and we realize that that's the tyranny. I mean of course the devil calls itself God. You know, how else does a tyrant stay in its position without saying it's here to serve you, it's going to help you learn, help you get to the next stage, that it's concrete. It's not concrete. It's made up. It's nothing. It has no existence. That's the most abstract you can be. But what's concrete, is what is pure existence, what is always here, and to, to serve that as what the word God points to, is to be free, and to serve this voice in our heads that is abusive, is to be in bondage.

[09:37] HILLARY: Well, that's flipped around isn't it?

[09:38] GANGAJI: Yeah.

[09:43] HILLARY: You got me on that one. I wanted to ask a question to you from you from a listener. Her name is Catherine. She's actually in Portland and she says, "Dear Gangaji, I'm wondering what to do with the judgmental, critical voice in my head. I have tried loving it and also ignoring it. Neither seems to work for long. How do you face it without trying to use a formula to get rid of it?"

[10:08] GANGAJI: Oh, this is such a good question.

[10:11] HILLARY: Yeah. Good one, huh?

[10:11] GANGAJI: This is so good because when we try loving it or ignoring it, we are still trying to get rid of it. We are hoping if we love it, it will go away or if we ignore it, it will go away, but that doesn't work. So a long time ago I learned through somebody's teaching, I think it was Almaas's, about the superego and agreeing with it. So if you're having a superego attack that is saying you're stupid, you'll never get it, if you're going to engage in the dialogue with it, you agree, you say yes, I'm stupid, I'll never get it, but you fully agree and in that agreement there's no job for the superego. Now if you agree by following the superego, oh yes, I'm stupid, oh yes, I'll never get it, that's very different from simply turning and facing this demon and saying, yes, you're right, so what? And in that moment you can actually stop, because you aren't trying to get rid of it. You're agreeing with it. And when you agree with it, not in collusion with it, not in alliance with it, but just simply meeting it fully, yes, because we are stupid and we're not going to get it as something to keep and if we are willing to say, oh yes, and to meet whatever fear may arise around that or to meet whatever sadness may arise, then that's inquiry and we are, when you inquire into the superego, it's like inquiring into the Wizard of Oz. You discover it's just sound and fury and it signifies nothing.

[12:05] HILLARY: You know what? I have a perfect example of that, once again, as we look at the transparency of our conversations, and I remember, this must have been a year and a half ago and we had done like five conversations and they were really beautiful conversations, but I remember standing in my kitchen one day and this voice said, there are so many people that could have a better conversation with Gangaji than you, and I stood there and I was thinking, I mean it froze me. It kind of fried my brain and I remember listening to it for like 30 seconds and

then I thought to myself, well yeah. I'm sure there are. I'm sure there are lots of people listening right now that have thought of a question I didn't ask or many times I missed a question I could have followed up on something that you said, so it was like, oh yeah, sure.

[13:01] GANGAJI: Oh, how beautiful. In that moment there's a humbling of the mind, which is the collapse of both ego and superego. It's like, yeah, and that's the truth. Who knows what's out there? Who knows what our capacities are? But if we stop that discussion, then we get to discover it, here we are, and in that there's presence and there's possibility. I love that. I love that Hillary. I know that when I first started meeting with people and before I would come into the room gathering, especially if I saw a lot of shoes out front, which meant there were a lot of people inside, there would be often this arising of, oh no, I don't have anything to say to them. I'm not here to give them anything. And there just had to be a willingness to know that's the truth and that really they weren't here for me or anything I had to say, that there was something bigger that was taking place and my willingness just to be in the fire, just like your willingness and your sync that day to be in the fire of yes, that's so. That's what I mean when I say meeting it, agreeing with it, and stopping the conversation about it.

[14:24] HILLARY: Wow, that's profound isn't it?

[14:25] GANGAJI: Yes.

[14:26] HILLARY: You know, we don't have to play clips every time, but I just like to, and there were a couple clips I pulled from Revealing Strategies of the Ego and I think they're really great examples, first of all, you're describing the difference between the ego and the superego, but how we in spiritual circles can get so caught up in, well, now the ego is bad, so I wanted to play a couple of these clips so let's start with this one and then before the end I'll play the second one.

[15:00] GANGAJI: Great.

(clip)

[15:02] UNNAMED SPEAKER: I guess what kind of concerns me is that I sense that as this movement is happening it feels very natural, that there's still some kind of ego, that there's still some kind of ambition or compulsion or wound that maybe is manifesting and some lack of, you know, just clear resonance with, with, with the spirit.

[15:27] GANGAJI: And what would be the problem with that now?

[15:31] UNNAMED SPEAKER: Well, it's okay, but at the same time, it's not what I, you know, would want to sort of aim for.

[15:38] GANGAJI: So now this very thought or feeling, it's not what I would aim for.

[15:42] UNNAMED SPEAKER: Yeah.

[15:43] GANGAJI: *This is what we call superego. So there is a part of the mind that splits and calls itself God or Father or Mother or Teacher or Guru, and says, you shouldn't be like you are.*

[16:06] UNNAMED SPEAKER: *I know that, yeah.*

[16:06] GANGAJI: *Good, that's very important to know that because this is really a great battlefield, especially in spiritual circles, because there is this superego that says the ego must go. Right? Who else cares if the ego is here or not? (laughter) So if there is an ambition to get rid of all ambition, this is to be suspect. You see what I mean? If there's an ambition to be egoless, it's like ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, what's wrong with the ego? Who has a problem with the ego? Does God have a problem with the ego? Does awareness have a problem with the ego? Only ego has a problem with the ego. And it's a huge problem. It's a huge problem, because it's ego imitating God and that's called, well, we know what that is. That's Lucifer in Lucifer's kingdom. Right? It's the split from God in saying, well, I will give the orders. I will perfect this human being. I will purify this human being and that's hell. It's hell. It's Lucifer's realm or that's the story that points to it. So in the welcoming, in the recognizing this Lucifer tendency without then having then a super, superego to throw Lucifer out of the kingdom, just welcome ego, ambition, needs, welcome it all into the consciousness that you are, in this moment, into this moment, then you can be this very limited human being with limited or karmic propensities that just get worked out, just get displayed.*

(end clip)

[18:17] GANGAJI: *What I wanted to be sure that we touch on is that religion often takes the form of the superego, as we know, that's part of our conditioning, but not just the old religions, but whatever new religion we have taken on, and for some of us that can be an old religion, but I noticed often, I mean, I love and respect Buddhism, and I'm profoundly forever indebted to Buddhist teachings, but often in Buddhist magazines, especially American Buddhist magazines, I just see superego. It's all about how you should be better and what you need to do to be better and while in a definite sense that is very useful in terms of discriminating wisdom, but when it just becomes new clothing for the old voice of the superego, then it just makes, it makes what is basically an abstraction and an illusion, this I as an individual, it makes it more concrete. It gives it more supposed consensual reality and that's very dangerous and that to me is the great offering of Ramana, where you actually just stop all of the discussions of what you should be, what you are, what you were, and turn your attention back to what is here. Then you recognize that all of this other is a form of mind entertainment and sometimes it's very perverse mind entertainment, even if it is calling itself religion or enlightenment support, so it does require extraordinary discriminating wisdom to see that and the willingness to recognize the abuse in whatever new form it has taken, whether it's a new age religion, whether it's an old religion that is new to us, it may... When you start to feel it or sense it with weight and heaviness, then you know that you are bringing your old demon to it and putting the clothes of this new form onto it, whether it's Advaita. Often people come to me and say, oh, I know there is no I, but since I'm experiencing an I, I must be wrong. You know, we can see the absurdity of that, but when you're in the throes of it, it's very painful, so there is a willingness to stop, just for a moment and tell the truth. What is always here? What is before any judgment, and finally, untouched by any judgment? What is free? What is awake?*

[21:19] HILLARY: When you were saying that, I was thinking about something else that seems familiar. When we were talking about something being, you know, our thoughts being concrete, I was thinking of that idea that we have to work for something and that's part of this superego voice and when it comes to the truth, the truth is just here, present all the time, and it really is a matter of receiving. It's not about working.

[21:44] GANGAJI: Yes. And that's a huge step, and maybe there's work to get to that step, but if you are listening to this, you have done your work and if there is work to be done, it's revealed, but it is revealed with clarity and lucidity without the need of a club or a whip or a kick and the willingness to not be clubbed or whipped or kicked is really the willingness to be free.

[22:14] HILLARY: I remember we did that show some months ago on the difference between therapy and satsang and there's a certain cognitive aspect to this of dealing with the superego and then there's a place that you're talking about, where you're stepping beyond that.

[22:33] GANGAJI: I don't know if I would say beyond it. I would say before it or through it, because in a true way it is actually simply being more of who you are. It's not about becoming or even transcending, of other moments or the experience of transcendence. It's a recognition of what is here in moments of beauty and in moments of this abuse, what is already free of the abuse and recognizing that you have full capacity to be true to that, to be vigilant to that, without need of a stick, and let's say the stick was useful in some part of our evolution, collectively or individually, but at this point in time, are you willing to give up your attachment to the stick? Are you willing to be free as you are?

[23:39] HILLARY: We have a few minutes left, but before we end off, I want to play this second clip, the second part of this conversation with this young man and this particular time you and I are in different places. You're in Ashland and I'm in Portland, and oftentimes we're sitting across from each other so when I play these clips you can hear them really clearly, and this time you may not be hearing all of this Gangaji, but I wanted to play this second clip because it has to do with then, it's still this spiritual twist of, well now I can't be arrogant, because maybe I'm actually good at what I do, but I can't be arrogant and the it's the egos orientation to that, so I'll play this. You tell me if you can hear this well enough.

(clip)

[24:23] GANGAJI: I'm not saying that arrogance won't appear. It will appear, but it's so obvious when it appears, so obvious. And we try to make what made the arrogance appear go away. Just meet the arrogance. If you are fully, completely arrogant for one second, one second, fully arrogant, you see without a doubt the absurdity of arrogance, the nothingness of arrogance, just like worthlessness. It's the same thing. It seems to me what I'm hearing here is maybe a fear of arrogance coming in. Usually it's worthlessness, but it's exactly the same. If you experience fully, completely, one second of true absolute worthlessness, worthlessness is nothing, just a club of the superego. Nothing. But you run from worthlessness or you run from arrogance, and there is a constriction of a life force and the superego then is in charge and this is not enlightened. It's just the ego saying now we're getting somewhere, now we are making it. Back! Nut uh, nut uh - I saw that you had a thought about ambition, bad, bad, bad. Losing ground again. Only 80% free today. Back to the labor camp. (laughter) So in being true to yourself and

being true to what you love, there is a free falling, because there's no control then and mistakes will be made, mistakes are perfect to be made and there will be pain and pain is perfect to be felt.

(end clip)

[26:40] HILLARY: Only 80% free today.

[26:43] GANGAJI: It reminds me of what Papaji would often say, that as we start to really awaken to our inherent awakens, to freedom, all the gods and demons of the past come to reclaim us, so these old voices that keep us in a particular line or in a particular abusive situation attack and as that tape was clear, if we're willing to meet or be with the attack, which is what I was referring to earlier, to agree with the accusations of superego, then there's no power behind it, behind the throne of this attacking demon.

[27:33] HILLARY: Well, I can't tell you how grateful I am that our conversation on hell didn't go well.

[27:41] GANGAJI: Good.

[27:42] HILLARY: Because we got to have this conversation and I think that you've been talking about the superego in your monthly webcast With Gangaji and I just think it's something that everybody can relate to.

[27:56] GANGAJI: Yes. I had somehow not even realized or remembered that it is really the issue of bondage, is the superego, not the ego, but the aspect of the ego that splits off and calls itself God.

[28:11] HILLARY: Well, thank you for allowing me to be human. You're, you're so, I don't know, you're so welcoming in that way and it makes our conversations better all the time I think.

[28:23] GANGAJI: Here we are, together.

[28:36] HILLARY: I want to say thank you to Catherine for contributing your question for this topic. It was a good one. And if you'd like to write to Gangaji yourself you can do that by emailing her at gangajiradio@gangaji.org. That's g-a-n-g-a-j-i-radio@gangaji.org. I sometimes mention Gangaji's live monthly webcast during the course of our conversations and if you'd like more information on how to register for that, just go to the website, Gangaji.org. And finally, if you'd like to support us here at this show, or if you'd like to find out about how to support this show, you can write us at that same email address I just mentioned, gangajiradio@gangaji.org. Well, next month Gangaji and I are going to redo that show on embracing hell. It's going to be a good one. How do we face the unthinkable? Hope you'll join us for that one. Until then, be well.