

[Gangaji Radio](#)

A Conversation With Gangaji Series

Host Hillary Larson

Episode 47

WHEN WE DISAGREE: ANGER, HATRED, DIFFERING OPINIONS AND THE
POSSIBILITY OF RESPECT

Released on August 17, 2016

[00:05] INTRODUCTION MUSIC

[00:16] HILLARY LARSON, HOST: Prochoice, prolife, progun, anti-gun, neutral on guns, immigration, racism, sexuality, financial equality – the debate around political and social issues at this moment, in this particular time in history have resulted in some very heated conversations. Hatred has arisen at times with regard to some of these issues. Maybe we find this hatred in ourselves even if it's hatred about people who say hateful things. Who's right? And who's wrong? Do we have to agree with each other in order to get along?

[00:57] GANGAJI: We can have room for our differences, and room for the heat of our emotions. But we continue to return to the bond of being in this together.

[01:10] HILLARY: Can we respect each other even if we disagree, even if we are passionate about what we believe? I'm Hillary Larsen and this is *A Conversation With Gangaji*.

[01:28] HILLARY: There are so many heated conversations, to say the least, about political issues and social issues and. Last week I, I actually had a couple of people coming at me on social media in a very strong way who had very strong political opinions and I felt like, you know, in the written world it was like the equivalent of covering your ears and just yelling – who could yell the loudest. And I, my impulse was to jump in and say well I'm right because. And I was able to stop myself from doing it. But I certainly had the impulse. So it seems like with these passionate subjects, these passionate opinions we have about immigration, and racism, and sexuality, and financial equality, I, I ask myself, you know, what is the bigger picture here, what does it mean, and how can we get unstuck from holding onto whatever we think is right or wrong?

[02:32] GANGAJI: You know, first of all I, I would really like to say that we are so lucky in that we can express our opinions, and we can disagree and speak that disagreement. I know it's certainly got out of hand in lots of ways here as it has in Europe. And yet there are other countries, I'm thinking of China in this moment, where you are not allowed to speak so openly and your Facebook, or, or online presence is monitored by the government. And, so we are really lucky that we have the opportunity to be so obnoxious to each other. And also it's really important to realize that it is a feature of the human species that we are very aggressive species, and we're very territorial, and opinionated, and probably extremely narcissistic as a species. So we are already pathological in the, in the psychological evaluation. And we're lucky in that we, we have freedom of expression. So how do we heal the divide? I don't know that we are equipped to heal the divide. I think we can recognize the divide. And in that recognition we can recognize that the divide, either side or any either or any of many sides all spring from the same source which is often "I am right", but even deeper than that is I am. And, and if we can recognize that, I don't think we have to try to get

into agreement. I think that we can learn to respect ourselves and from that to be willing to respect others. And that's difficult. That requires not agreeing, and not even maybe considering that they may have a point, but just practically, that if we don't respect ourselves and each other we will be in war. We will go back to war and there will be another civil war of some kind. There will be an implosion of the empire as there have been implosions throughout time. And maybe that is destined to happen. I don't know. But I know that for those of us on this call we can willing to see how, how challenging this issue of respect really is when we hear people saying things that actually is so disrespectful to so many people.

[05:27] HILLARY: You know I, I'm a good person. I try to do my best and I try to be aware of when I'm projecting onto somebody who I disagree with. But to be perfectly honest when I look at somebody like Trump, the outrageous hateful things that come out of his mouth bring up my own hatred. You know, and I know there might be somebody listening right now who actually is in favor of him, so what a perfect opportunity this is. And the better part of me would like to sit down with someone who believes that he is truly a great man and understand how they could see him that way but I am not sure that I would be fully able to hear them.

[06:11] GANGAJI: Yeah, probably not. And is there a problem with that? I mean, if, if you and this person who is opposed to your ideals sit down to talk you have very different agendas, you have very different desires for our country, for the different classes in our country, for our presence in the world, so of course you won't agree. Is there any problem with not agreeing? And knowing, that really, a kind of idealization that I should agree actually in a very deep sense sometimes just disempowers the strength of your argument. You should be able to make your argument, in the true sense of argument which is presentation, not argument as a form of war. But argument as, as, be able to speak and then the question is, am I willing to listen to this person? And you are willing, you just said that. And are, is this person willing to listen to you? And there has to be some agreement that you are at least willing to listen. And, and that has to come from both sides of course or there's no listening.

[07:42] HILLARY: The debate now is something that none of us have experienced really in history is that social media makes it possible for people to say things to somebody that they may not say to their face. It can be caustic and hateful. There's a way of hiding, you know, behind the mechanism of social media. But yet there's an anger and a hatred that is on the surface now, seems like it's on the surface now. And I wonder, this seems like a big question, but where do you think hate comes from?

[08:20] GANGAJI: It comes from love, it comes from loving your own life above all other lives. And loving your own reasoning, and loving your own arguments, and loving your, the person who's gonna save you. It all comes from love. If people on the opposite side of whatever side you're on didn't love their life, or love their country, or love their children and grandchildren, they, they couldn't, they wouldn't have any position. And of course no position can also come from love. But I think we, we want to separate hate out as some kind of disease but it's, it's, simply a reflection, or the source of an aggressive tendency to protect what you love. And it's a way of enlisting the mental, the story, with the emotional, the emotion of hate, with the protection, your view of what's necessary to protect what you have and what you love, and what you want to be.

[09:36] HILLARY: I heard this story once on NPR that stuck in my head and it was, they took these two groups of people that had very different opinions and I actually think the subject

was on abortion. And they had them sit in a room and share their opinions, but they also had them share about their lives and in the end, not one single person changed their original opinion, but they had a certain respect and even affection for the person that they had originally had a very certain idea about. And that to me was a huge teaching story.

[10:14] GANGAJI: Yeah it's beautiful. It, it did require all parties to come together and be willing to have a civil discourse. You know, to leave your, your weapons at the door. So that you can actually speak your opinions, make your arguments and not, not attack the other, not make war. Even, even though you may be for making war on the other opinion. At least in that moment nobody was threatened with death. You know, no doctor who was giving abortion was gonna be killed in that moment at that meeting. And so, there's, there's a possibility to actually speak. So I think we have that possibility and we're experiencing that possibility in this election cycle and, and we're experiencing how that possibility itself is being threatened by, by hate speech and by speech that intimates or encourages violence, even assassination. So that's what then is threatened and then I think that threatens the whole. Even though, you know, it seems like it's just coming from one particular part it's the whole is threatened. As in civil wars the whole is always threatened. And this is not new. I mean, I have been interested in history for a long time and this is not new to any country, any nation, any type of people. I mean, whether you are a Buddhist or a Christian, or a Muslim, or a Jew, or anything else, Hindu. This is not new. This, this fear, and hatred, and attack. So our challenge as people who are interested in the deepest inquiry is to recognize where it comes from in ourselves and in order to recognize where it comes from, we have to suspend the judgment of it, or we won't recognize that we are hateful people. We will just be trying to correct hateful people. But if we can recognize that we are all human beings, we are all limited. We are all driven by our love of life and our desire to protect life, whether we define that as the status quo of a white person, or as a black person, or as the planet. Then just becomes you know different, different parts of that, and that's our, that's our common ground. And if we can meet there, we will still disagree, I feel sure, but we will really disagree as a family and not a family at war with itself. I mean certainly in my, my family my birth family, there was huge disagreements and yet we continue to gather, we continue to love each other. If we got into speaking with each other there were huge arguments, and a lot of temper, and a lot of words that had to be apologized for on both sides later. But the basis was the love that brought us together. We recognized we are by some mystery related. And if we can recognize that in a bigger sense and it's true, I mean, if we live in the same country we're related, if we live in the same world, we're related. Then we can have room for our differences and, and room for the heat of our emotions, but we continue to return to the bond of being in this together.

[14:19] HILLARY: I can see that there's this thing called family. We did a show called When It Comes To Family. And then there's this family called humankind and somehow we have all shown up together on this planet in some way and I was working on another project for Gangaji Radio this week, and it partially had to do with, do you remember Matthew Shepard, the young man who was murdered in Wyoming back in the late nineties and it created this huge stir, that kind of hatred could exist. And at his funeral the West Borough Baptist Church showed up. I don't know if people around the world know who this group is, but they show up at funerals for service men and people who have been murdered as a result of hate crimes, just on the outside they seem like horrible people. In fact, their website is "GodHatesFags.com". I mean, that's just an example of what they spew forth. So when you hear outrageous things from a group like that and although you not agree with them, in fact

you might vehemently disagree with them, do you still know that you're not separate from them?

[15:35] GANGAJI: Well I'm not sure what you mean know.

[15:41] HILLARY: Well as a human being.

[15:41] GANGAJI: There's no doubt that I'm not separate. But we are human beings, but we are deeply separate in our opinions and in our respect for difference in opinions. So is there any doubt that they are not human beings? There certainly not cats or dogs, or. I mean there's no doubt about that. You don't have to know that. You don't even have to think about that, There it is. And I think that's part of what the heat is about, it. If it were cats or dogs displaying that, we'd have much more patience. But the fact that it's our, it's reflections of our self, our family, expressing this, that's what makes civil wars the most intense, the most bloody, the most hateful. Because "how dare someone who is one of us be so wrong". It's which is exactly what they feel. And they resort to the worst kind of hateful ridicule in that. And they stir it up you know, I mean, it's very irritating to see those people, to hear what they say. It definitely, I, I, wouldn't say I don't get stirred by that I think. They do their job. They, they stir us up and, but in that, they also stir up this, this possibility of this bigger consciousness to not, to not mirror them. To not meet hate with hate. While also not meeting hate with ignorance. To meet hate with intelligence that doesn't deny that we are in this together and yet can, can at least make a higher argument, or a, a more sane argument, or at least a more loving argument. I mean, their message is very hate-full. I mean they speak of God hating who, who they have channeled, that God hates, but I can't think of any religion that doesn't do that.

[17:56] HILLARY: I know there could be a tendency to spiritualize the subject of hate, and right and wrong. And when you look, and I just really like that we are using this specific example because it's such an extreme example of this thing of I am. I am. And what's emanated from I am is something as horrific as this.

[18:16] GANGAJI: Well, I mean, everything is emanated from that. Look how horrifically we treat other animals, other species. We make them prisoners and then we eat them. And I'm a meat eater so, I have to see that. We have to see that this I am is, is not lightweight. It is deep and complex, and, and it is here, wherever you look. In every plant, in every animal, in every person with a different or same point of view. It's this same I am in every planet. I mean if our planet is threatened by an asteroid coming out of space, it's the same I am. If our planet disappears it disappears into the bigger I amness. So we just, we tend to want to own this I am and then to decide what it's made of. And, and as you said spiritualize to give it, you know, usually, a one-dimensional drawing of what it means to be good and kind. And, and that has its purpose and I, it's beautiful and it returns us to a kind of happy innocence. But our innocence cannot be an innocence that excludes the complexity of the world and of our own emotions, and our own opinions. It has to be an innocence that is in surrender to something bigger and the willingness to be intelligent in that surrender. To not have that surrender make us into know nothings. To really not know how it is possible that we can all live together and yet to not become a know nothing. To be willing to open to discover and, and that's of course what these challenges of election cycles like this. I've remembered the last couple of elections with Obama and there was racism that was starting to be flushed out and now it's fully out there.

[20:37] HILLARY: It's almost like to me that there's this darkness that sits there. And, and then it gets stirred up by somebody and in this case Trump is the one that's stirring it up but it seems to reflect the opinion of this surprising number of people. Is that necessarily a bad thing, that, that it was there anyway and now it's up perhaps to be healed.

[21:00] GANGAJI: Well we will see, won't we? I mean, how can we know from this point of view? We can hope that that's true, hope that it gets healed. But that's where I don't want us to be spiritualizing about it – the dark has to come out. Because all we have to do is look at history and often then there's a dark ages. That the dark actually wins for huge periods and an enormous amount of understanding is lost for good. Whether it's understanding through art, or poetry, or literature, or philosophy, or scientific exploration, lost. And then maybe in hundreds of years' excavations and some of it is found. So it's, it's not necessarily good. One would hope that it will bring forth the strength to stand up to it and point out, as clearly as possible, how it is in error. How that if we cave in to those forces that are within us, just like if you are triggered by somebody who looks like your mother, or you're triggered by somebody who reminds you of this person who is rude to you, and you may hate them because you were triggered by them, one would hope that we've reached a high enough degree of civilization, if we can use that word, to not act on that. And what we are seeing is there is the triggering of that and the support of the trigger of this racism, and no nothingism, and, and acting on that. I mean the possibility for someone to actually be President of The United States, based on that. So I, I don't think we want to just assume that, that it's good, that it's all good. If we're speaking in terms of good, we gotta speak in terms of bad, good and bad. It's all here and the outcome is unknown. And, and we have a stake in the outcome, and we have a right to examine our stake intelligently, and to see if it, does it support all of us, or does it just support some of us. And, and what do we want? It's back to that question. What do you want? What do you want for yourself? What do you want for your children? What do you want for your country? What do you want for your world? What do you want for other? What do you want for those you disagree with, with those you agree with? Then we can actually get into this, this field of inquiry, this spaciousness of inquiry where we're not just going back and forth. Where we're actually going deeper within and not assuming that our going deeper within is gonna change anything. Who knows? Now, we don't know. We don't even know who will show up to vote. So, it's humbling. And, and I think that we have to be humbled. Because it's our minds false idealization that everything will work in the way we think it should work, for what we call the good. But what we're calling the good isn't necessarily what someone else calls the good. And, and we see that. We see that with Isis and we see that with campaigns of hate, and with religions of hate. We see it. To them, that's good.

[24:58] HILLARY: Julia from Canada asks "how do we stop something that seems so wrong?" But you made that point if, what if you don't think it's wrong? Do you see what I'm saying? Because we see what Isis is doing is wrong, but they don't think that's wrong and that's, that's true of any issue.

[25:16] GANGAJI: Well right, but you do, if you do think it's wrong, then you have an obligation to somehow speak. Or make, or bring your intelligence to bear on it rather than just rolling over because they don't think it's wrong. You understand what I'm saying? I'm, I'm really supporting participation and often support retreat. Because that's, in our willingness to retreat fully from right or wrong, then we actually have the potential to participate in a way that's intelligent and present. And in that participation there are choices and there are decisions and there's, there's again, right and wrong.

[26:06] HILLARY: So the intelligent choice in the moment might be to do nothing and other times it might be to do something.

[26:15] GANGAJI: Yes, who can say?

[26:18] HILLARY: Well I was, I had this meeting a couple of weeks ago with this incredibly talented filmmaker on a project that I wanted to do. And at the end of our time together she admitted to me that with everything that's going on right now she's sometimes feels just paralyzed with fear. And she said to me, "I don't know what to do with that". And just, what came up for me instantly was I looked at her and I said "you just keep putting beauty into the world that's what you do".

[26:50] GANGAJI: That's wonderful. That's beautiful. Because really in the darkest times, the darkest moments of where civilizations have been lost, I am sure there have been beings who still smelled the flowers, and were in awe of the sky, and the rising of the sun, and felt love and happiness for those close to them. There's a way that this undercurrent of this mystery of life continues as it will. And maybe it's really necessary for humans to fail since they have oppressed the earth. And, and we are so overpopulated with humans. Who can say? As speaking for a human, I, I don't want us to fail. I want our intelligence and our evolution to serve something that is impossible to even conceive of. But who knows what, how that comes about or if it's even possible. I know that those of us on this radio show have the opportunity to, to really examine what, what is my life about? What am I giving in this moment? And as you said to this filmmaker, even if you're paralyzed with fear, what can you give? What can you experience? And there may be times where you simply have to go under the covers, or it's certainly legitimate to retreat. Some people live their whole lives in retreat and are never involved in political questions. If you're made that way then that's what you'll do. Then others of us are quite involved. Like it or not we are made particular ways that either makes retreat more natural for us, or participation more natural. So either way you can be true to yourself.

[29:12] HILLARY: As I was putting this episode together, I found this really, really good piece where Gangaji talks about ending the war within ourselves and how that translates out into the world. And it seemed like such a beautiful way to wrap up this particular conversation, this topic. What I've done is I've created a special bonus piece and I'm gonna post that on iTunes. Also that'll be on the Gangaji Radio page. And we also have our own Facebook page. Well it's the Gangaji Community Facebook page, actually it will be as a video so you can actually see it. It's a powerful piece. It really adds to what we are talking about right here. I just want to take a moment to thank everyone who's donated to Gangaji Radio. From our perspective it's such a huge, huge gesture from the heart when you would just sit down and take the time to do that. And every single donation means so much to us. We wouldn't be here if it weren't for you so we just wanted you to know. We just want to say thank you again. That's is for us for right now. Thank you for being here. I'm Hillary Larsen. And this has been *A Conversation With Gangaji*.