

[Gangaji Radio](#)
A Conversation With Gangaji Series
Host Hillary Larson
Episode 49
SPIRITUALITY AND THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT
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[00:05] INTRODUCTION MUSIC

[00:10] HILLARY LARSON, HOST: To say that the US Presidential election of 2016 has created a firestorm around the world would be an understatement, a huge understatement. There are moments in time that change the course of history and this is absolutely one of them. While some people are happy with the outcome, the election of Donald Trump has left many shocked, angry, and in fear of the future. For that reason, we are doing this special episode of *A Conversation With Gangaji* this month. I caught up with Gangaji in Australia via Skype so she could respond to some of the questions and reactions that have naturally come to the surface. Do we have the capacity to bear the fallout from this no matter what side we're on? Important questions for the sobering times we find ourselves in. Yes, some of us feel blind-sided, but where do we go from here? I'm Hillary Larsen. Thank you for joining us for this special edition of *A Conversation With Gangaji*.

[01:23] HILLARY: With the events that have happened over the last few days I got several messages and texts and people really wanted to hear your viewpoint, your experience, and your ray of hope on all that's happened in the last few days that have been so shocking for most of us, and heartbreaking for most of us. I know I was driving to work on Tuesday morning, it was a beautiful day here in Oregon and I was started to feel very excited about a female president, the first female President of the United States. And by the time eight o'clock rolled around I couldn't breathe. So I imagine you had something similar going on with you.

[02:04] GANGAJI: Yeah, it was just shocking. It was daytime here in Australia and we were following it on our iPhones and, you know, just to watch the red go across the United States. Yeah, I had a lot of emotions. I, I, like most people expected Hillary to win and, it, it's a shocking thing and I was speaking to a group of people last night here in Australia at a meeting and I called it a catastrophe. And I think that when there are catastrophes, this election catastrophe, we have to recognize that they come from some place and in that sense, they're natural and really I was comparing it to the tsunami that happened in Indonesia and actually affected a lot of vacationing Australians as well as many other innocent people. That it was a force of nature, an act of nature and yet it caused enormous heartbreak. So I think we can see this, one way of seeing it is that it comes as a natural result of fear and anger and despair for many people. And then someone reaches up to capture that and, and in my view that someone is Trump and I think it's a catastrophe. I don't know what will happen but I think we have to accept that and mourn that, and, and then see how we can rebuild and see who is subject to harm, how we can protect them, and, and not fall into a spiritual escape hatch of, all is perfection, or this is necessary, that may be true, but, but in the moment, the disease has struck. And we have to tell the truth about that.

[04:08] HILLARY: I was able to gather quite a few reflections from different people and I, I want to share as many of those as I can with you for this particular special episode we're doing. So I'm going to start with the heat. And I have a couple of people that I wanted to

share their experience with and this first one comes from Leanne. And Leanne was very clear on how she feels. And she says I know family members of mine have voted for Trump, my sister and her husband, they are white privileged Jewish upper middle class and really have never seen hard times. I can feel in me a very strong desire to absolutely attack them, move away, truly a desire to end the relationship based on their voting and the thing is, I don't seem to find a place in myself where this is – quote unquote – wrong to do. Yes, I do love her, but her action is such an offense that I can only feel the push to turn away. So she continues on here with something I think is, is important that you were talking about. And she was relating to Trump is the same as the KKK and the Nazis and the people who killed Matthew Shepard and the protestors who stood outside his funeral as that was happening. But she says, my feeling about spiritualizing “the don't hate Trump” or his people is this attempt to really engage in a binary relationship, making rage and resistance as an opposite to love, when to me, rage, resistance, speaking up, being angry is all love. We must fight for what we love. Love without willingness to enter into the darkness, into the depths of our humanity, our animal nature, is a whitewash of love in my opinion and frankly, an insult to it as well.

[06:03] GANGAJI: Beautiful, strong.

[06:04] HILLARY: Yeah. You know I think it is so, such a reflex in a spiritual community to talk about stillness and love, and I'm not saying those things aren't there, but it is easy to say that on a meditation pillow. It's easy to say that in a quiet of a beautiful room.

[06:25] GANGAJI: Well, I think it depends on what you mean by quiet. If you are talking about not having emotions, it, you know, it's very useful to have a period of time every day where there are no emotions, but if you're speaking about recognizing totality of oneself, then you recognize it's not separate from the world. That that world and world events – some wonderful and some truly horrific – are just aspects of the same self. So I, I'm would never counsel someone to get to silence, but to recognize that silence, the awareness of the world, is the ground on which the world appears. Not as an escape from the world, but really as a conduit to sanity in the midst of the world. And it's only from sanity that true appropriate action can be made. Certainly there will be rage and despair over any number of things and over something that is potentially this dangerous for the whole planet, regardless of your political leanings or your vote. The whole planet is potentially at risk. We don't know what will happen and we can only really open and wait and see and trust that, if we are called on for specific actions we, we will trust that that comes from the stillness rather than coming from a denial of it. So yes, the challenge is to discover that in the midst of deepest grief, or deepest rage, there's a ground of, that unites us. At you were speaking before we started the show about reading an article someone wrote about actually knowing these people who voted for Trump and I suspect many of us know people like that I mean, even though he didn't get the most votes, there are Trump supporters everywhere. And I grew up in a solidly red state with Trump supporters and, and they're good people. I think they're deluded. I'm certain they're deluded and misguided and dangerously ignorant perhaps, but also I know that they are good people. They're loving people and, and really their rage, and their fear that supported their vote for him only comes from love of their family and, and their lifestyles, and their, their view of America. So if we can recognize THAT then we recognize we may be, we are certainly poles apart, in our opinion, but the, the unifying force is this mystery of love. And I don't want to, to even use that word maybe love is to, to spiritual a whitewash. And I don't want to do that at all. And think sometimes people expect spiritual teachers to act as Hillary and Obama acted beautifully to calm the nation and prepare for the transfer of power. But

that doesn't mean you aren't experiencing what you're experiencing and if that takes you to the street in protest, or petitions in protest, or, or whatever future action may be then I salute that. I'm not speaking of, of ends. I'm speaking of where it all begins. And we can recognize that in everyone.

[10:10] HILLARY: Well, so Craig from Austin, he had a question for you Gangaji and he said how do we speak with an activist voice against things that are hurtful to people from within our core of peace?

[10:24] GANGAJI: Well, you, you, discover how. You know, if we generate another formula for how, then we'd be robotic. We won't be responsive. As the capacity to respond, which is responsibility, really, the ability to respond. But we try to formulate that as a spiritual person or from peace, if we're really willing to open to NOT knowing how, to, to suspend our, our idealizations of how, and just open and discover and be willing to see when we make a mistake, when it's not productive, or it doesn't work, or it simply adds to the fire, and correct the mistake. Because, we can compare this to lots of things in history and I'm a student of history, I understand the parallels, Nazi Germany, or Fascist Italy, or Brexit, or many things that have happened in our world. So we can be intelligent about that and yet, be open to see what is the unique character of this particular catastrophe. And how do we deal with this, in support of all, to bring, to welcome, to support all in awakening to this peace that is here regardless of circumstances, or regardless of emotions, regardless of states. So it's not always necessarily a peaceful peace, but it's always at peace even though there may be, as I've said, great grief, or anger, or despair. There's a, the privilege of actually being, being here, being present, being a life form that can witness this, that can participate in this, that really overshadows everything. I, I think that's what Obama was pointing to when he said the sun will rise tomorrow. And that's life is here. It's, it's bigger than any of us.

[12:40] HILLARY: I was thinking about that the other day because I remember, I was too young to remember when both of the Kennedy's were shot, and when Martin Luther King was shot, but, but I remember being in the kitchen when my mom was listening to the Watergate hearings. And I remember the day that Nixon resigned, and we all remember 9/11, we remember the day that the bombings started in Afghanistan. And I was reading your, few words with Gangaji this week and it was so clear to me that I am, and I am still here. I am here.

[13:22] GANGAJI: Yes. And deeper than before. That these events that wake us out of childhood, out of a kinda childhood naiveté, that show us what's possible in our own free land, are deepening agents. And I don't mean that purely self-involved spiritual sense, but deepening so that we can actually bring a, a deeper consciousness to the table to what it means to our democracy To the world. To the planet. To each other.

[14:03] HILLARY: There were a couple of reflections that I received from Andrea and Leanne, different Leanne in Washington DC. You know and they're very much in the middle of the political world there and very active, and, heartbroken by what's happened here with Hillary losing and. They were talking about feeling almost betrayed by other white people. And having to work amongst people who had voted for Trump. And really wanting to get permission, like is it really ok to not really want to have anything to do with people that you feel have betrayed you. So this is the kind of thing we're talking about if you wake up in the morning you walk out the door and there's the realities of life and they're just asking you how do they hold that?

[14:57] GANGAJI: It's a raw, raw time. And there's, you can respect and honor yourself. But finally you can't separate yourself. I mean, do you continue to speak to your family, who voted for Trump, or your, your co-workers, or those people who were excited. I remember very well when Kennedy was shot and one of my sorority sisters who happen to be a cheerleader at Ole Miss was part of the group celebrating his assassination. They were thrilled because they saw him as the epitome of evil. They saw him as a demon. And if you look at from where their, from my point of view, misguidance comes, it's ignorance, and so we can all recognize that, that we are all ignorant in a huge degree to what it means to live in the shoes of another person. And in our willingness to respect the rawness and the vulnerability and, and whatever emotional state, the grief, the sadness, the rage, to respect that but don't necessarily follow that or believe that. Do you understand what I mean? There's a way of honoring it without making it the master. Because feelings are not trustworthy, in fact, it was feelings that led to this event. Many people, many people who interviewed and voted on Trump could agree they think he's a live wire. They don't know if he's predictable or trustworthy or temperamentally suited. But they voted on him for purely emotional reasons. Or they voted on him to vote against Hillary Clinton, or they didn't vote, which was essentially a vote for him. Because they, they had so many issues were complicated that they just checked out. So it's a messy affair. As democracy is very messy so is our emotional response to events and we can appreciate the mess. Without thinking the mess is, is right or wrong. Just let it be as it is. And, I mean, there are people I wouldn't want to engage in conversation with right now. I never feel obliged to engage in conversation with anyone. We can, we can meet without the engagement and maybe that's what we all need is, just a time to respect everything. And again, I don't know that that's true, I mean I do respect the protesters who are on the streets. So maybe that's the time. And I think we, we have to respect whatever our particular process is for FINALLY coming to clarity. A clarity that is solid and can meet anything and to me that's what Hillary Clinton and our President Barack Obama showed the day after, their, their grown up, their adulthood, their willingness to shake Trump's hand and, and invite him to the White House, while it could not have been pleasant. Still, it was done for the sake of the greater whole. And that's, that's a lesson to all of us.

[18:26] HILLARY: You know this feels like a car accident. You know, you didn't feel it, you didn't see it coming, and then you spend these days with moments, going, actually this couldn't have happened. And then there's the direct blow even to the body and I, when I emailed you and asked you if you would be interested in doing this special, I joked with you that somebody had texted me and said that they were relying on chocolate and Xanax. And I was like that's not such a bad idea. But it does, I mean, in all seriousness it does feel like a huge assault to the psyche, to the heart, to the body. And I've had people tell me that they had their grown children calling them in the middle of the night in tears, sobbing.

[19:14] GANGAJI: That's really beautiful to, the people care so much. That's it not just an "oh business as usual". That we were, and are involved in our political process and I don't separate that from our spiritual life. That's just the way I'm made as a form. I'm always interested in the political outcome. So I really think it's beautiful and painful. When the heart breaks it's painful. But it can also break more open. And and include more and, and be more intelligent. Because somehow we should've had some clue this was gonna happen. I mean, I do believe that perhaps the polls were biased and didn't have a clue. And maybe we were complacent and even arrogant. And so in that sense we've been profoundly humbled by, by not knowing the country we live in. By not knowing what would appeal to certain people. And

that's like a, yeah, it is like a car accident. I really appreciate that. It's a shock. But shocks are not necessarily bad. They can be bad. It can be a shock that's really leading to worse. I don't ever want to sugar coat this. Because we do have history as the model for this and this really is not a good sign in terms of the toxins in the system. But also shocks can serve to alert the whole system to get healthier. To wake up. What will happen in this case, I don't know. It's too soon to know. And it's a serious case. So, you know the worse could happen. It could be, it could be a period of American fascism, or, I mean it is a vote for that in many ways. And it could be a planetary disaster, it is a vote for that in many ways. So I, I want to encourage everyone to stay alert, to stay awake and to be tender with yourself. To, to also be in nature and to also recognize you can receive love at this time. You can receive the peace that is inherent to your being without betraying your intelligence of, of fighting for the planet, of fighting for justice, or fighting for inclusion of all people, of all kinds. So, that's our challenge, is what it feels to me. And, and also the challenge to recognize that many of our brothers and sisters don't agree with us at all, are diametrically opposed to us. And that's the reality, and, and where do we go from here – that's the discovery.

[22:21] HILLARY: You know, I have to say that I can barely tolerate the sound of Donald Trump's voice. And I can barely stand looking at him, I'm just being honest with you. And the idea of having to hear his voice for four more years feels unbearable to me. And Phil had a question that I think you addressed in some way when we did the, the show When We Disagree like three or four months ago, maybe three months ago and he. Phil says is Trump in some way representing our shadow side, if so, how do we relate or respond that that? And I think that's what I'm talking about is when you have something in front of you, or a person who's so abhorrent is there some reflection is there some way of inquiring into that?

[23:14] GANGAJI: You can bear it. You may not want to bear it. It may be extremely grating and you certainly have permission to turn it off, but the truth is you CAN bear it. You have enormous capacity. And it's here, and to me again, that is what Obama was making clear to all of us and Hillary. That it's here, this is the President Elect and that's what we can open to, the horror of that, and in that opening there is a deepening of intelligence. You can say he's not your President and I understand that, but you can still open to the fact that he's here as well as you are here.

[23:59] HILLARY: Well, as we kind of turn the corner here to even just the beginnings of acceptance, I wanted to read a couple of posts here from, these are just very beautiful posts because we all have our, our rage and we all have our fear but I love what these two people wrote. This is Grace from Maui and she says just like you, I can really feel the heaviness of seeming dark times and this is the clear guidance that arose for her. What an opportunity for each of us to stand up and shine like a sun. This is our time, what you stand for, what is the purpose of your life. It's up to us to be the change we want to see. When we awaken the world changes. It starts when each one of us, now more than ever, I am guided into the stillness within, to the love that is here always, shining like the sun. To the peace in the core of my being I stand here. She goes on to say some other beautiful things but I also wanted to share what Karen from Australia says. Good advice from Papaji she says, Wait and see, it's just so important to feel it first, fully, all the way through, spiritual slogans, side step, shock, grief, broken-heartedness, hopelessness and disgust, and deny it in others. This has to be met, anything else is denial and running away. The rallying together has begun, hearts in arms, and families, and communities are coming together. Be present, wake up, and get on board. One radiant heart at a time.

[25:44] GANGAJI: It has really brought forth depth of expression. And in a number of people. I am sure it's true on the blogs, but I've really been aware of the With Gangaji postings from our, our monthly webcast. And I, I just been slain by the beauty and the depth and the willingness to expose oneself and to gather together. You know, I was looking, just happen to turn on some movie on the t.v. it was a documentary about the war, world war two and Australia's involvement and the Japanese and you know, that is REAL horror. This that has happened may lead to that, may lead to real horror, but in this very moment we are not at war. We are certainly participating in wars all over the globe. But in THIS moment, those of us listening to this are not at war. It can be so much worse than it is now. And it may get worse. But to use the, the truth of what is here now as a ballast and a strengthener from the capacity to experience and then discover what your, your part is. This is our possibility. This is how we can support each other.

[27:13] HILLARY: So beautiful, I mean, when I look at a couple months ago I thought to myself, just the thought floated through my, my head, that he might possibly win and the thickness, and the suffocation I felt. It felt unbearable and yet it's true, we all survived it, we're here today. And what I noticed in myself is just this desire to stand taller. And it was the desire to stand taller for my, my friends who are gay, my friends who are black, my friends who are Hispanic, for me as a woman, for this planet of ours, to just stand taller.

[27:53] GANGAJI: That's it Hillary. You've said, you've said it. That's it. To not be squashed by this. To not be distorted by this. To not be made in the image of hate by this. You know, I did want to say one thing too, I mean. We are speaking in actually very privileged positions you and I because we are white, we are citizens and, and we aren't directly at this point, threatened for our viewpoint, we still do have freedom of speech. But there are many people in our country who are directly threatened by this. And this is a much more serious event for them. And I really just want to extend our support and our capacity to stand tall, as you said, with and for them too.

[28:50] HILLARY: *We all have our internal navigation systems so to speak. And we can choose to go in any direction we want, but I appreciate that you are a reset for us all. And I appreciate so much this time, you've taken this extra time of doing, this all the way from Australia. It's a, it means a lot to all of us.*

[29:10] GANGAJI: It means a lot to me. And that's maybe this unforeseen beauty of this catastrophe is that it brings us closer together. We can support each other.

[29:39] HILLARY: It seemed really important to address this game changing event that's happened. And I hope this special episode of *A Conversation With Gangaji* has brought some clarity to you all. It's such a big thing we're going through right now. We had planned on releasing The Call For Help this month, but now that'll be next month. It'll be for December. Coming up later in the week, we're looking forward to the official launch of a new show from Gangaji Radio. Many of you already know about it. A good number of you actually made this show possible through your donations. This new show is called Epiphany. Gangaji will be talking about this new show and what it means to her as we launch the first episode, The Medicine Woman. So that's later this week. Thank you for joining us all for this really important conversation. I'm Hillary Larsen, take good care everyone.