

[Gangaji Radio](#)

A Conversation With Gangaji Series

Host Hillary Larson

Episode 50

THE CALL FOR HELP

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[00:05] INTRODUCTION MUSIC

[00:09] GANGAJI: I pray. I pray for the awakening of all being. Who am I praying to? God. Who is God? It's God, that's who. (Laughter)

[00:25] HILLARY LARSON, HOST: Praying for help, asking for help, giving help - that's what Gangaji and I are talking about this month. When we feel backed into a corner, asking for help can seem hard. It can seem difficult sometimes. In fact, it can be sort of an act of courage to do that. In those moments when we call out for help if we let go of what that might look like, is there a guarantee that our prayers will be answered? So, that's praying for help. But what about the other categories of help, like giving help? When does offering help serve and when does it interfere? When is it actually a distraction? When we move beyond our daily hopes and fears, is there a final prayer just to be free?

[01:11] GANGAJI: Each of us has prayed in some form or another, religious or secular, to be free, to be finished, to be at peace.

[01:20] HILLARY: I'm Hillary Larson and this is *A Conversation With Gangaji*.

[01:28] HILLARY: I thought this month we could talk about the subject of help. I know that I've heard you say from time to time, "God help us from the helpers."

[01:38] GANGAJI: Yes.

[01:39] HILLARY: I actually see help in different ways. And I see help as there's misguided help. There's rejected help. There's well-intentioned help. There's help that damages. And then there's just pure help. And when I was looking at putting this topic together, I was thinking of the story I heard a long, long time ago, like thirty years ago. And I may not have it right, but basically it had to do with a guy that got stranded on a desert island. And later, somebody said, do you believe in God? And he said, no, I don't believe in God. And they said, why do you not believe in God? And he said, well, I was stranded on this desert island and I prayed and prayed and prayed and God never answered my prayer. And they said, well, like what happened? How did you end up back home again? And he said, oh, a boat came by and picked me up. (Chuckles) So, I...

[02:35] GANGAJI: Sweet.

[02:35] HILLARY: I thought just a perfect example of help.

[02:38] GANGAJI: Mmmmm. You know, when I first was addressing the issue of help, it was... really to speak to people who identify themselves as helpers. And that identity, like missionaries or preachers, is the issue, because then you, you assume you actually know what somebody needs, what's right for somebody. And, you have no idea what anyone needs. So to me, the distinction is really being available for support, and helping which is a kind of interfering. And I think that's a huge difference. I know I wanted to help, I wanted help and then I wanted to help. And Papaji said, if you really want to help, you really want to be of the most sublime help, then don't give rise to a single thought. And, that's the truth. Then, you are available, because your attention is not on your own internal assessment of the situation or evaluation. You're available as energy, as love, as skill.

[3:49] HILLARY: I was reading this article just the other day. It was actually was directed to professionals that work in hospice palliative care. And this person was an expert in the field and he was saying that sometimes what's missing is just being. And that there's so much doing, that the idea that you could actually help somebody by not doing a thing is quite a revelation for some people.

[04:19] GANGAJI: Oh, it's a huge stretch for most people. It was, you know, we've had periods on this radio conversation where there's just been silence. But I remember when I first had radio conversations with people, if I suggested any silence that was like, oh no, that's impossible, we can't do that! That would be "dead" time. In other words, nothing would be happening which equates to death. But it's so alive. When you're willing to not follow the rules of a radio show or the helping professional, just to be yourself. And help can look all kinds of ways. It may mean leaving the room. It may mean saying no. It doesn't necessarily, the way we usually interpret it, mean, meaning yes, what else? Tell me what you need. And that, and that's where the identity of the helper comes in. And it's not so much for the one helped, although it can cause a lot of damage there as we know from the history of missionaries all over the world. But it's... one's own identity as a helper, then there's a burden and usually there's burnout and exhaustion because that identity has to be maintained or else you're not a good person. If you're not a good person, what are you then? Real.

[05:52] HILLARY: I mean I certainly have been guilty of being a helper. And on the flip side of that, a couple of months ago somebody I don't know very well who was just so completely well-intended, you could tell. I was chatting with her and she was asking me what was going on in my life. And as you know my mom's in hospice now and my dad passed away just some months ago. And I started telling her that – and just this wave of grief came up, it was nothing dramatic. And it was just like, whoa, I felt it catch in my throat. And in my world, it was this beautiful feeling, that feeling of grief. But she jumped in immediately and wanted me to inquire into the grief. And I was like...uh! Well, now...

[06:39] GANGAJI: Give me a moment.

[06:41] HILLARY: Like, well now the grief has now been corrupted as you say.

[06:42] GANGAJI: Mm-mm

[06:45] HILLARY: And it was really a moment of, of seeing just this well-intentioned person, but also, maybe there's this discomfort in just letting me sit there for just, just ten seconds to feel that.

[06:58] GANGAJI: Well, we are trained especially as helping professionals or helpers or serving other people to interfere with negative experiences. And you know at the baseline, that's really intelligent. If somebody is having a negative experience, they may need help. And they may be in such an experience that they can't say I would like your help. You need to just jump in. So, it's an edge again without a formula, but first of all to be willing to not fix yourself. To be willing to experience your own emotions or your own physical or circumstantial situation and to take a moment and not move from that, then you know how beautiful it is directly and you don't feel as compelled to fix other people. And that's what helping is, is fixing. So I'm not anti-help by any means. We all need help. And we all need fixing. But the truth of who we are needs no help, needs no fixing and that can be in charge and then this grief you were experiencing or some other negative, so called negative, experience can really broaden and deepen the person experiencing it. And it's also an honoring of the situation your mother's in, of your father dying - it's a way of honoring that and honoring yourself for the love in that. So I think we're too quick to give help. And that possibly could come because in our privileged society we have to make up for the guilt we have for not helping those who really need help - because there are plenty of people in the world who need just the help we could give - whether that's money or time or skills. But either we aren't inclined to do that and we feel guilty about not being inclined or we're afraid to do that and we feel guilty about being afraid and so, then we have to help whoever's around us. And it becomes just a way of avoiding some powerlessness, hopelessness, the whole condition.

[09:12] HILLARY: Is there a way that you know when to give help and when not to give help?

[09:19] GANGAJI: You know I could have given help when it wasn't wanted and not given help when it was needed. I don't think any of us can...there must be a mathematical formula somewhere (laughs). It would be blackboard after blackboard, you know, taking into consideration your particular skills and their needs and factoring in your age and their age and their heredity. I mean I could just see the square roots and pi's and...but we don't have that formula yet. So it's a willingness to make a mistake and to see that, oh, that was a mistake! You know, I jumped in too fast or oh, I didn't answer that call fast enough! And that's the human quality of it. So, no, I don't know. I don't. I have no idea. It's a discovery.

[10:07] HILLARY: You know I think that this thing that's called "enabling" can be, you know, somewhat harmless. But then other times, if someone's like a chronic enabler, that's the same thing as being a chronic alcoholic and it's all about feeling like you can't bear what's underneath.

[10:28] GANGAJI: Yeah. Avoidance of pain.

[10:29] HILLARY: Yeah. A long, long time ago, I was...I met this friend in treatment and once we got out of treatment we'd go to AA meetings together, just like, you know, two deer in the headlights just going to all these AA meetings. And I remember one day, she said to me, I'm sorry I'm having a hard day today. And I said, well, what's going on? And she said, well, I can't afford to buy my hormones, my prescription for my hormones, so I have to wait till next week.

And there was something so unacceptable to me about that that I said, well, I'll buy your hormones for you. That's ridiculous! So I went and bought her hormones and then a few days later I was talking to my former counselor and I just happened to mention that situation. And you know how you hear something and then years later it's still kind of ringing in the back of your head. And he said to me, rather than saying, well, that's nice, Hill. He said, wow, he goes, perhaps you could have been a little more creative with that. And it was almost like it interrupted my helping.

[11:35] GANGAJI: Mm-mm. Taking care of.

[11:36] HILLARY: Yeah.

[11:37] GANGAJI: Because maybe there's a distinction there of – subtle maybe, but – taking care of and helping. The first part of the conversation you were really talking about the different kinds of help. And if there is a pure help or what Papaji was referring to when he said with a still mind without thinking. Then that's really beautiful. And if that was, that's the impulse, who's to say you shouldn't have bought her hormones or not bought her hormones whatever it is. It just somehow follows from that. But what we look for are these formulas: that I should do this, I shouldn't do that, next time I won't do that. And it just doesn't work. Because life is alive! (Chuckles). And the situations are different, even though they may look the same. So, I appreciate your counselor saying that, interrupting your identity as a helper, but that doesn't necessarily negate the fact that you responded to a friend....and, a close friend if you're going through recovery together. And, so that kind of help I have no problem with. Now, if she comes back every week and says, Oh! I can't buy my groceries. You know, then, that's where I think the creativity would come in... I don't know. Just hearing that, I wouldn't want you to... think you shouldn't help. That's what I... when I've spoken to people about help like this then I've later heard reports about how happy they were that they stopped helping people. And it's like, oh, well that's, please, go back to the first way. (Laughs.) Because we all need help – I just want to stress that. You know, we are a social group of animals and we need each other. Even the hermits need us. So, we don't have to deny that; but if we're enslaved by that, then we are suffering and we're causing suffering.

[13:39] HILLARY: Enslaved. That's the word, isn't it?

[13:40] GANGAJI: Yes.

[13:44] HILLARY: Can I flip the subject of help for a moment? Because I've heard a lot of people say this that it's easy to help people. It's a beautiful thing to help people. But then receiving help can be hard.

[14:01] GANGAJI: Uh-huh. Yes. (Hill laughs.) Because then you're not on top. (Gangaji laughs.) You're actually the one receiving.

[14:09] HILLARY: Well, I think that if there's any thread of unworthiness sitting there dormant, that will stir it up.

[14:15] GANGAJI: Yeah! Unworthiness or superiority. You could go the whole spectrum.

[14:22] HILLARY: Interesting. I flew in to do these interviews this time around. I usually drive. and I had to ask a friend if he would come and pick me up at the airport. It was kind of late at night. And if he asked me, I'd be like, oh, I'm on it! Don't even think twice about it. But it... it was hard! Just to say, hey...

[14:41] GANGAJI: Yeah. It's a good exercise, isn't it, because we do need help and sometimes we need to ask for help. I remember when I first started having meetings and Eli and I were taking care of them. It was in our house and we were taking care of the pillows and cleaning up afterwards. And then it grew and grew and it was clear I couldn't do all that. Eli and I together couldn't do all that. So we asked for help. And then we asked for donations. And then we, you know... and it was beautiful! People love to help. And they're there you can see help is needed. So in your willingness to ask for help, then people don't have to interpret how you need help. (Chuckles.) Especially if you can be specific about how you need help. And it's clean. There's either a yes or a no – there's I can help you or no, I really can't help you. And there's a cleanness. I think it's when we don't want to ask or we insist that somebody take that it gets to be some form of dominance, submissive trip.

[15:49] HILLARY: Sometime I would love to put on our schedule the subject of "taking life personally" because I think that is such a perfect example of that because if somebody says no, I can't help you, there's a way it's like oh! Maybe they don't like me anymore or whatever, whatever you're trying to avoid.

[16:08] GANGAJI: So that was great help for you then, when they said I can't help you. It throws you right back in where only you can help yourself. Other people are helping you by being themselves. And only you can finally help yourself.

[16:25] HILLARY: Well, someone had written in about asking for help, just true help, that prayer for help. And what he was saying was that asking for help is really just surrendering. And it's been awhile since I played a clip for us while we were sitting here. But I really want to play this clip for you because the woman in this particular retreat was talking to you about fear – and she was finding she was just running away from fear. And then you got into conversation with her about just stopping and facing the fear. And it led to the topic of help. So let me play this for all of us.

(clip)

[17:05] UNNAMED SPEAKER: Often when I'm running I don't know anymore how to then stop. Or how to...

[17:13] GANGAJI: You can't know how to stop. But you can always recognize if you're running, fear is in charge. Sometimes appropriately running out of a burning building. Fear is in charge. You don't have to think. You run! Of course. And you know what you're talking about, psychological, psychic fear. So you recognize...that's all you need to know, I'm running. Right? You don't need to know how to stop. Just recognize you're running. (Woman laughs!) And that tells you there's fear here. And that tells you there's something to be met here. There's something calling my attention so strongly that it got me running away from standing in truth, for

truth. And that can take many forms: fear of survival, fear of image, fear of power lost - many, many forms, all of them. We have them all. But if you are running away from truth, you know it! You know it because there is... you know it, don't you know it? Do you? Can't you feel it? Whatever the reason, whatever the justification, whatever the sleepiness? Somewhere, you know it! And that's what you have to call on. Somewhere you know it. You don't know how to stop. You don't know how to meet it. You don't know what made it happen. But that's the moment of calling out, help!

(end clip)

[18:50] GANGAJI: I remember that – that meeting.

[18:58] HILLARY: That's the solitude of asking for help.

[19:01] GANGAJI: Mm-mm. And then opening to receive.

[19:07] HILLARY: When I look at my life and I see what's trustworthy, I look at the times where I prayed for help without any anticipation of what was going to happen. And then looking back, it's like the choreography of it all is just stunning to me. Every time!

[19:29] GANGAJI: What a beautiful, mysterious universe we get to participate in.

(clip)

[19:47] GANGAJI: *Have you said help?*

[19:48] UNNAMED SPEAKER: *I have – at times.*

[19:50] GANGAJI: *Uh-huh. And what happened? Was help present?*

[19:56] UNNAMED SPEAKER: *Yes!*

[20:00] GANGAJI: *This is the Truth! It's the very nature of prayer. Only, if your prayer is: help me get away from this fear. That's a normal kind of prayer. If your prayer is simply: help! I need help! Then every aspect of yourself, and every sangha, and every age, and every place is here with you – because you're not alone. You're supported. But if you spend your time how did I get here, how do I stop, what'd she say now, meet it, what...??? You see? That's just part of the run.*

[20:38] UNNAMED SPEAKER: *Not again!*

[20:39] GANGAJI: *Not again. Why me? This must mean I'm not enlightened. How did I lose it? All of that is a way of avoiding help. Help is a call. It's a prayer, help! To even say the word help the arrogance is already dropped. Right? It's not I can do it myself. Let's see...what was it I am supposed to do? I know I've got to stop! Just say, help! Can you say it? Like, help!*

[21:11] UNNAMED SPEAKER: *Help.*

[21:12] GANGAJI: No. Not like that. (Every one laughs.) Really. Help!

[21:19] UNNAMED SPEAKER: Help!!

[21:20] GANGAJI: Help!

[21:21] UNNAMED SPEAKER: Help!! (Laughter)

[21:22] UNNAMED SPEAKER: Help!

[21:23] GANGAJI: What a beautiful word that is. That word reverberates out through the cosmos. Don't you know that? Haven't you experienced that? Maybe you don't experience the help immediately, but you will experience it if you... if you ask for it, it comes. It may not come in the form you thought it would come in or in the outcome you thought it would be, but it's here! Help is the grace of your being, the true awakened soul of yourself.

(end clip)

[22:11] HILLARY: I have one more thing for you before we go. But first, there's this: we have a new edition to Gangaji Radio. It's called Epiphany. And for those of you who haven't heard our first official episode came out just last month. You can go to the website gangaji.org or to iTunes. You can find it in both places. This first episode of Epiphany is called The Medicine Woman and it very much aligns with what we're talking about right here – the Call for Help. I'm going to leave you with one more clip from Gangaji. It's on the subject of prayer. It's one of my favorites, maybe for you, too. If you'd like to watch the videos where I took these clips from this month's show, they'll be up on the Gangaji Community Facebook page. We'll do that in the next few days here. Gangaji Radio is made possible by you. Thank you for your donations. Thank you for sharing *A Conversation With Gangaji* with others. I'm Hillary Larson. Be well everybody. We'll see you next time.

(clip)

[29:18] GANGAJI: I pray. I pray for the awakening of all being. Who am I praying to? God. (Chuckles.) Who is God? It's God, that's who. (Everyone laughs.) So there's a way that we decide, oh, there's non-duality that means this should be excluded. I shouldn't ask for anything. Yes! Ask for help. Give thanks. Give praise. And then you will find that you're giving thanks and giving praise everywhere. And then you will recognize that God is omnipresent. God is Love. God is never absent. And then, yes, let's do away with the word God because it has so much charge and we might go to war tomorrow if we are using the word God. But let's be at peace with it all. Prayer is the most powerful intentionality in the universe. Each of us has prayed in some form or another, religious or secular, to be free. To be finished. To be at peace. And, we are each of us playing a role in the answer to that prayer – so each of us can be used as an aspect of the answer to that prayer. Sometimes a horrific aspect and sometimes a beautiful, graceful aspect, but all, finally, when your prayer is so huge that it encompasses, "I want to know the Truth of what is!" "I want to be free." Then, everything can show you an aspect of that.

All that's required, as difficult as it may be at times, is the simplicity of opening. Just for an instant, not following the impulse to attack or withdraw or attract. Just open. Then discovery is natural.