

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 5
Host Barbara Denempont
The Power and Pain of Projection
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[00:00] MUSIC

[00:01] GANGAJI: As long as we try to keep some fear from exposure, that fear then operates as we run from the wave. But in the willingness to stop and meet it as it is, there is the full capacity to see what has not been seen.

[00:28] BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont.

Today on this podcast I want to bring to you the topic of projection. Projection is an aspect of our human minds that allows us to survive and to function through daily life. But it can also lead us to suffer unnecessarily. We can experience the results of projections in our partnerships, our families, our careers. Just within our own minds, and we can also recognize it externally.

When fear and hatred is projected onto the so-called “other”, it can manifest into horrible violence. There are so many tragic events we have witnessed across all parts of the world, and while we may be able to see projection operating in the extreme most easily, what is essential is to see it in ourselves. That’s a beginning point – how do I project? How do I create unnecessary suffering? And can I stop? Well, yes, it is, it’s possible to stop. And part of that stopping is simply recognizing the mechanism of projection – how do I do that?

So today I wanted to bring this exchange to you, because it’s a real-time demonstration of projection operating. And as you listen to the dialogue, you can perhaps see yourself on either side of it. This exchange is sometimes funny, sometimes confrontational, but I hope you’ll listen all the way through to the end, even if some of it makes you uncomfortable. Because the monologue that follows this exchange is very powerful, and in it Gangaji just simply brings us all the way home.

So, let’s take a listen.

(Excerpted from Marin, CA Satsang with Gangaji, January 17, 1997
Transcript file: “01-17-97 Marin Cont. Effrtlss A.doc”)

[02:15] SATSANG PARTICIPANT: *My heart’s pounding like crazy.*

GANGAJI: Would you like a drink of water?

PARTICIPANT: *Um, sure.*

GANGAJI: They didn't give me any. Oh yeah, here it is. I should have a little teapot up here, serve tea? *(audience laughs)*

PARTICIPANT: *Thank you. It's very kind of you.*

GANGAJI: *(audience laughs)* It's the least I could do.

PARTICIPANT: *I'm having a major déjà vu, time tumbling upon itself, because I lived in an ashram for ten years. So here I am, it's another coast, it's another hallway, it's another hallway in which -*

GANGAJI: Another couch. *(audience laughs)*

PARTICIPANT: *Another couch, instead of a dark skinned Indian man we've got a American woman here. He was framed with his teachers, you are framed with your teachers.*

GANGAJI: Yes. Here you are. What will you make of it this time? *(audience laughs)*

PARTICIPANT: *What will I make of it this time? Well, after having, you know, after having been through this long time, it's not doing a whole lot for me.*

GANGAJI: The setup?

PARTICIPANT: *The whole, the whole setup. I sense that you ... (audience laughs)*

GANGAJI: Let's see ... what could we do?

PARTICIPANT: *I sense that you, you mean well. (audience laughs)*

GANGAJI: I'm just wondering ...

PARTICIPANT: *You play your, you play your role well.*

GANGAJI: Oh I hope very well. If I play my role well, then the challenge or the push of this setup, this maybe recurrent nightmare *(audience laughs)* that has appeared, will be able to be penetrated by consciousness, so that you will recognize it is just a role *here*, and just a role *here*.

PARTICIPANT: *Well that's exactly right, and, you know, that's why, you know, you know, I won't, you know, you know, you may be raised up in your chair and at the front of the audience but ...*

GANGAJI: Would you rather sit here?

PARTICIPANT: *Uh, I could sit next to you.*

GANGAJI: Why don't you sit here and I sit down here. *(audience laughs and applauds)*

PARTICIPANT: *(laughs) Well now do I get to have somebody give me flowers?*

GANGAJI: You can have some water.

PARTICIPANT: *Um, do I get to have somebody come up here and sit over here and ...*

GANGAJI: I'm sitting here. I'm sitting here. Hello, hello.

PARTICIPANT: *Right, so you're sitting, you're sitting here. What I saw with other people sitting here when you were sitting here was them making themselves small and, and making you big and giving away their power to you.*

GANGAJI: So now that you're sitting here on the couch are you bigger and I'm smaller?

PARTICIPANT: *Mhmhm. Nope. It's just a setup. We're, we're the same.*

GANGAJI: Exactly.

PARTICIPANT: *Yeah.*

GANGAJI: So what's the problem? *(applause)*

PARTICIPANT: *Wow, you're good! You know you're good at the playing, playing around.*

GANGAJI: I'm real, I'm real. I'm not good. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad.

PARTICIPANT: *Well I would have to hang out with you, you know, a long, long time ...*

GANGAJI: You've got a lot of conditions, don't you?

PARTICIPANT: *What, a lot of conditions?*

GANGAJI: Yeah, like first it's, you know, it needs, you need to be there and I need to be ...

PARTICIPANT: *Hey I don't need to be here. This was, this was your offering.*

GANGAJI: Well you needed it to be different ...

PARTICIPANT: *I don't, I mean I, I, I mean I don't care, I could sit across here you know?*

GANGAJI: You needed it to be different from what it was, the setup.

PARTICIPANT: *No, no, I was fine with the setup.*

GANGAJI: Oh really?

PARTICIPANT: *I was just making an observation. I mean we could switch right now.*

GANGAJI: But your obs-

PARTICIPANT: *... but that's how I see the setup.*

GANGAJI: But your observation was one of contraction, am I, did I misread it?

PARTICIPANT: *My observation that, my observation itself was contraction or ...*

GANGAJI: Your observation was part of a contractive pattern. If I read it correctly. I can definitely misread energy, and part of what you were speaking of was the *déjà vu* of the two gurus and the person who is sitting in an elevated position, playing a certain role, but you weren't speaking as realization, you were speaking as contraction. So if you are -

PARTICIPANT: *See I don't draw dualism there.*

GANGAJI: Uh huh. Well maybe you should. Because it's, it's being manifest in your form. So if you aren't drawing a dualism, perhaps you're unaware of some dualism that is in fact being drawn. (*Yeah*) So it's one thing to say I don't draw a dualism, but if in fact you are speaking very dualistically and suffering as a result of it -

PARTICIPANT: *Right. You've, I feel like -*

GANGAJI: - why not tell the truth?

PARTICIPANT: *- I, I feel like you've spoken as equally dualistically all afternoon.*

GANGAJI: I don't mind speaking dualistically. That's the way we speak.

PARTICIPANT: *That is the way we speak.*

GANGAJI: And even dualistic speaking can point to the same consciousness, speaking as unity, speaking as dualism, speaking as nothing, speaking as something, doesn't matter. Am I being a good student?

PARTICIPANT: *Saying what you're saying. You know, for whatever reasons, you know, I don't know you. You're the teacher here, you're part of an organization, you know, there's, you know there's the very big be shared agenda in this room that's informing all of us and forming you and forming me. And -*

GANGAJI: What's that?

PARTICIPANT: - *for me to think that there was something more going on, and that, and that your awareness is, is as effortless as is being indicated, or whatever, that you're, that there's more than talk going on, more than "role" going on. You know, I'd, I'd have to hang out around you, you know, an awfully long time, you know (Well) outside of the role.*

GANGAJI: You mean you want a personal relationship and then you'll judge me on that?

PARTICIPANT: *Pardon?*

GANGAJI: You want a personal relationship and then you'll judge me on that?

PARTICIPANT: *Well,, I feel like you know, I'd have to hang out with you a bit before, you know, I, you know, assumed ...*

GANGAJI: I'm not really interested.

PARTICIPANT: *... just assumed anything about, about, about you as a person other than the fact that you got up here and you teacher, you, you know you're playing a guru role, you're in a guru setup, but to me about, you know, who you are and how you live the rest of the life, it doesn't mean anything, it doesn't prove anything to me.*

GANGAJI: Well what does it, what does it matter then?

PARTICIPANT: *It doesn't.*

GANGAJI: If, if what I'm saying you can relate to from your own direct investigation, then this role has served its purpose. So I, I don't get, you know, either you come into this room and you hear what I'm saying and it resonates and you say, "that's right" or you say "that's wrong". I'm not asking you to follow me, I'm now asking you to be a devotee to mine, I'm not interested in taking the role that far. So I don't quite get it, why this, what is it you're doing up here?

PARTICIPANT: *Uh, what am I doing up here?*

GANGAJI: Uh huh. What is it you want when you, you came up here? Just to say it, or did you actually want to explore deeper?

PARTICIPANT: *I wanted to offer my point of view and my experiences from having, having played the satsang game for many years, having had many many many friends play the satsang game, and having heard these teachings for, for many years.*

GANGAJI: But you're very embittered by them, or that's what your voice sounds like, I could be wrong.

PARTICIPANT: *Yeah, I'm ...*

GANGAJI: So if you are embittered ...

PARTICIPANT: *Yeah, you know, I'm you know, I'm, I'm pretty damn bittered, yeah, I feel like, I feel you know, you know what you know you've been, you know, been expressing and you know what I've heard other teachers express and I've heard, you know, other people live is just, I just, you know I think it's a lot of word salad, I think it, I think by positing this you know reality above our embodied reality, I think it's very ...*

GANGAJI: It's not above it, I don't, what, maybe you have a ...

PARTICIPANT: *... it's you know, this higher truth, I think it's very demeaning to, to the Truth.*

GANGAJI: I don't believe you've understood what I've said. I believe ...

PARTICIPANT: *Okay, then, then tell me.*

GANGAJI: ... I could be mistaken, but I believe that you have ...

PARTICIPANT: *Then then tell me more.*

GANGAJI: Okay, let me say this. This is part of telling you more. I believe that you have seen the setup and that's fired or triggered something in your mind, and red flags and flashing lights, and you assume you know what I'm saying based on what was said to you and based on what your experience was with the people who said it and your investigation of what was said. That's what it seems like to me. So, it seems that you came up here prematurely, that in fact you haven't checked me out enough to know if what I'm saying is what was said to you, if what I'm saying demeans anything that ... Is this your first satsang here?

PARTICIPANT: *This is my first satsang.*

GANGAJI: So maybe you want to give it just at least to the end of the satsang and check it out, because I think you're jumping the gun, based on some stimulus response of pain. I could be wrong, but check it out.

PARTICIPANT: *I, well, I think it's both true, I think you know there, you know, one side there's some truth to it, yeah, you know, on the other side, you know, there's a social happening, there's an embeddedness that we're all in. There's a power relationship here and there's a seeking here, there's pain here, and, you know, I, I think it's pretty damn realistic to say -*

GANGAJI: And what else is here?

PARTICIPANT: *- that it has an influence.*

GANGAJI: And what else is here? Because you're, you're just skipping over what the biggest influence is.

PARTICIPANT: *So your question was “what else is here?”*

GANGAJI: You spoke of pain and social context and seeking, but you're, you're leaving out ...

PARTICIPANT: *People are complex, you know, there's joy, there's joy here and...*

GANGAJI: People are com-, there's enormous complexity ...

PARTICIPANT: *... there's joy here and there's whatever people bring here.*

GANGAJI: But what is present whether there is pain or joy or complexity or social context or asocial context or bitterness or elevation or devaluation? That's what's being overlooked, and in that overlookingness there's an unnecessary contraction. And in that contraction there's a projection and a judgment that's premature. You may come to the same judgment after you'd known me four satsangs, ten years, I don't know, but I know that it's premature based on what you're saying, or, I suspect strongly, I would, I would state that it's premature.

PARTICIPANT: *It's a little hard to speak and think straight being on the spot here ...*

GANGAJI: Well that's good, that's already a softening.

PARTICIPANT: *I'm, you know, I'm not good, I'm not good at it any situations not a strong point for me.*

GANGAJI: Doesn't matter. Just as you said that, before you got it together a little more, there was already just an opening. So just in the willingness to be a little vulnerable. I'm not, I'm not collecting followers, you don't have to do anything, you can walk away from here. I'm sorry you had a bad experience. It was probably valuable in other ways, as you can see.

PARTICIPANT: *Hey I had no regrets. It's pretty harmless.*

GANGAJI: Good. That's great, so just open your mind and see. Just check it out for yourself, for *yourself* though, not from the past conclusion about what a guru is, or what a role is, or what pictures flanking a teacher mean.

PARTICIPANT: *Well you know, I just, you know at this stage in my life, I need different things, different things than satsang ...*

GANGAJI: But here you are in satsang. *(audience laughs)* Here you are.

PARTICIPANT: *Well, came with a, you know, came with a friend, a friend wanted me to go.*

GANGAJI: Okay, I'm sure. So good, but whatever, here you are.

PARTICIPANT: *Here I am.*

GANGAJI: Just be here. Do something different later.

PARTICIPANT: *Here I am, having this conversation with you in front of everybody, it's an experience ...*

GANGAJI: Yes, so do this now.

PARTICIPANT: ... *it's great. It's not exactly what I expected, this is, this is cool. (That's, that's good.) This is something I can certainly tell my friends about, if, well, much as I can recount it.*

GANGAJI: If you like, if you like, but ...

PARTICIPANT: *Yeah, why not?*

GANGAJI: ... but for the rest of the time just be here with an open mind, and see. Okay?

PARTICIPANT: *Ah, sure enough.*

GANGAJI: Can I have my seat back?

PARTICIPANT: *Ah, sure.*

GANGAJI: I know there are a lot of people who have a lot of experiences with either parents or gurus or lovers or older siblings or authority of some kind. And it's true I am playing a role of authority, I mean besides the fact of visibility, I am sitting on an elevated stage. It's a very tricky business, it's a very tricky *leela*, a very complex *leela* that we're in. Most of you have heard that when I realized I had done whatever I could do for myself, I began to ask for help, true help. And how shocked I was that true help revealed itself to be a patriarchal, Hindu guru, still living in India. Each thing I could have ticked off as something I would never do. Not only that, he looked, looks like my father looked. *(audience laughter)* And I was very proud of a moment when I was seventeen years old where I rebelled against my father, where I actually ripped his glasses off his face and threw them on the ground as I asserted my independence. And here I am back, back asking for help.

Well of course it's the perfection you know of this constantly having to come up against what one supposes is the problem. Until one can see, and, ironically, exquisitely, it was seen through this form, with this patriarch, guru, Indian, that there is that which reveals all these roles, all these experiences, all these states that come from these experiences, these effects of these causes, all of that to be totally insubstantial. And in the realization of the insubstantiality of that, the revelation of the complete *substantiality* of beingness, as consciousness, recognizing itself as That, through every form, through every role. There is of course a kind of exquisite, karmic revelation in having to play the corollary, or not *having* to play but getting to play, the corollary of the patriarch as the *matriarch*, you know.

What a *leela* this is. What a play this is. If there is attachment that the play look a certain way or not look a certain way – attachment - then there is an overlooking of what is unaffected by any

looks. Of course this can be heard and used as some justification for misuse of power or, on either side, lower or higher. But if it's heard truly, then you are not holding back from playing whatever role it is you are to play, for whatever time you are to play it. By recognizing that all roles, student, teacher, patriarch, servant, when realized as roles, reflect pure and radiant consciousness. So that student enlightens teacher, teacher deepens student, child awakens patriarch, patriarch awakens child, therapist, client, son, daughter, brother, sister, friend, enemy, all of them, exquisite vehicles for the deepening of the truth of what is role-less. In our minds, we say "Role-less? Then should be no roles." And then maybe we could have a proletarian revolution. But do roles disappear? Do they disappear in proletarian revolution? No, obviously not. We've seen enough of them to see.

So I'm not suggesting we bring back a monarchy, but I am suggesting that you *stop* where you *are*, without needing anything to be changed, or without needing anything to *not* be changed. To see what is unaffected by changes. To see what is eternal, continuous awareness, effortless in its beingness. And then the experience of the heart bursting open or clarity appearing or roles reversing - it's part of the play.

This man who came up here played a very important role. I don't know, well obviously there was a willingness to play enough that his body was propelled up here, so that an exposure of fear, an exposure of past experience of wrong-doings, great and small, harmless and harmful, can be laid bare. As long as we try to keep some fear from exposure, that fear then operates as we run from the wave. But in the willingness to stop and meet it as it is, there is the full capacity to see what has not been seen. To see the seer. And to see that everywhere, in all form and in all formlessness. So obviously, this man is not an isolated incident. You must know this in your own mind. You *must* know this. This is your own self. This an aspect of your own self, speaking an aspect of your own mind. Let it be exposed, let it be seen, let it be set free.

[23:56] BARBARA: Well that was a very rich exchange, and a very rich monologue that Gangaji shared with us. I hope these selections from the archives are of true benefit to you. They are of benefit to me, so thank you for letting me do this.

You can let me know how we're doing by posting your reviews on iTunes. Please give us some feedback, we would love that, and always we welcome your reports and your topic suggestions. Write to me, Barb at info@gangaji.org. That's info@gangaji.org.

Looking ahead, this weekend Gangaji is going to be on the road again. The San Francisco Bay Area volunteer team is hosting Gangaji's open meeting in Mill Valley on March 24th. And then Gangaji will be traveling to Vancouver for an open meeting on March 26th.

We're so grateful to the dedicated volunteers that make these meetings possible all through the year. There are so many ways and opportunities for you to connect with Gangaji, including of course this podcast. But you can also get her complete schedule of in-person and online events on the website, at gangaji.org.

This is Barbara Denempont. Thank you for listening. Until next time.