

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 21
Host Barbara Denempont
Reckoning with a Cruel White Legacy
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[00:00] MUSIC

[00:05] GANGAJI: So in this teaching, in this gift from Ramana, there is the possibility to discover what one *is*. Before all becoming. After all becoming. What one is now. And that willingness is a willingness to not run from the beauty or the horror. To meet it all. To see it all. Finally.

[00:45] BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself: Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. It's only been a month since I delivered our last podcast, and in that month our world has once again transformed, ignited by the latest senseless murder of George Floyd.

This moment that is unfolding before our eyes is at once horrifying, filled with anguish, and bursting with a requisite outrage. This moment is also exhilarating because it's rich with the possibility of taking this shared journey to end systemic racism. As a white person, I want to say to the white people listening, we have a profound opportunity to address a long white legacy of racism, and that is no small matter.

So where can we begin? I heard a man say today that the history of racism is a history of denial. And we're all familiar with our capacity to deny. In our willingness to end our denial, there can be an opening of all our hearts and minds. To that point I found this marvelous recording from 1998. The sound quality isn't perfect, but this message from Gangaji is what I absolutely needed to hear today.

Let's take a listen.

(Excerpted from Marin, CA Satsang with Gangaji, January 11, 1998)

[02:20] GANGAJI: Welcome to Satsang. Well, Happy New Year. My brother-in-law asked me what my New Year's resolution was. You know, I stopped for a moment and I said, truthfully, "My resolution is that all Being live in peace and harmony." And I realized that there was some belief, somewhere, that it is not possible. I mean, we look at the way humanity is conducted and programmed, it—obviously the mind can only say "It is not possible." That the very program of survival precludes peace and harmony. And the belief in that conclusion is what keeps us from resolving it fully and completely. So this willingness to go against what the mind says is obvious. And to resolve, fully and completely, that all Being everywhere, in every situation, live in peace

and harmony, is the resolve to be true to who you are. Not to be true to what you have become. But to be true to who you **are**.

I was, just this morning, reading in one of the magazine supplements that come with the Sunday paper about Desmond Tutu. I think it is in Parade or something like that, an interview with him. And you know, on the surface of it, what we say is somewhat different. He is a Christian bishop, he preaches the word of Christ, he is a man of action. And even in this article he was speaking of how essential it is to remember. And I am always telling you to forget. But there was something about the article that grabbed me, the energy. And of course I have seen his picture and I know him to be a beautiful, true man. And I knew that somehow what he was saying is really exactly what I am saying. Only he is saying it from a different angle, as we all speak from different angles.

And at one point in the interview, as he was—I don't know—I guess everyone in here knows who Desmond Tutu is. Well, he is a bishop in South Africa. And he is a Black bishop in South Africa. And he is in his sixties. So he is—been there, watching both the horror and the end of the horror, throughout this whole wonderful time in South Africa. And they have a policy in South Africa now, where it is called “amnesty”, where if you will simply confess to what you have done, you will be considered for amnesty. Not all are given amnesty. Some are given prison terms. So in this many people have come forward on both sides to confess what it is they have done. So that the victims in the courtroom can hear the confession. They can hear what exactly happened to their child, or their husband, or their wife, or their friend. Where they were murdered, how they were murdered, where they were buried, if they were buried. And so of course, it has been deeply, profoundly emotional. And it's his belief, and Mandela's belief, and the people who support this amnesty program, that that will heal the country; that it won't be just another time of seeking revenge for what was done so that later their children will have to seek revenge for what was done, and on, and on, and on, which has been the history of the world, of course.

So it was—it's a beautiful article to read, you catch the flavor of his commitment and the, what he has witnessed, what he has heard, both horrible and beautiful. But there was one phrase in particular where when I read it I said, “Ah, that's it, that's where we really meet.” And he spoke about, it's essential to not hide or be in denial from the horror. It is essential to meet it straight on. Eyes open.

And so in this resolve that all being live in peace and harmony, it is not a trivial kind of la-la kind of resolve, where you can just put on a happy face. It is actually the willingness to meet, straight on, all of the horror. Beginning with yourself. Beginning with your own mind. Being willing to see it **there**, rather than having to project it—over there. Rather than having to find blame, having to find an enemy, an other, a “them”. Just the willingness to stop and to see it. And he used a word that has become a kind of psychological cliché but it is absolutely true, the word “closure”. In this willingness to see the horror, closure is revealed. If you are seeking closure, you often will just deny some of the horror. But when you are seeking nothing but truth, and in that seeking you are willing to see **everything**, then closure is by-product. Peace is revealed, harmony is revealed, to be your own Self, your own nature. Not what you have become, but what you are. What you have **become** is a big mix of beauty and horror. And you like to think you're just the

beauty, and **they** are just the horror. Or some people flip it—they are just the beauty, and I am just the horror.

But that's what one has become. So in this teaching, in this gift from Ramana, there is the possibility to discover what one **is**. Before all becoming. After all becoming. What one is now. And that willingness is a willingness to not run from the beauty or the horror. To meet it all. To see it all. Finally. And to see where it all comes from, truly. So it's a huge resolve. That all Being—**all** Being—no one excluded: no tribe excluded, no nationality excluded, no species excluded. **All** Being live in peace and harmony.

Even if it is impossible, so what? So what? What else will be your resolve? You resolve this fully, then you are the proof. You, yourself, are the proof of its possibility. As is Bishop Tutu, and Nelson Mandela, and Ramana, saints and sages of all times. The proof of what is possible. Then your mini-drama, your soap opera, is so uninteresting. So small. Then the drama, this drama of the Universe which we just now found out this week, is constantly expanding. It's not collapsing on itself. It is expanding, eternally expanding. And it's giving out more light than there are stars. Impossible. No ... reality. So I invite you to join me in this immovable willingness.

[13:05] BARBARA: If you haven't had the opportunity to listen to the testimony that George Floyd's brothers just gave before Congress, I encourage you to do that. Just like the 20 years plus before in South Africa, white Americans can now listen ever more intently, and receive the painful truths of Black Americans' experience, rooted in centuries of cruelty. White people can also recognize how the words and deeds of violence play out both by our own hand, and on our behalf. Finally, it's really when we end our denials that we have a choice, and that choice is that we can stand by as it happens, or we can stand up.

This is a really hard moment, it is a reckoning. And most likely there are going to be many more, and even harder moments that we will have to face. As Gangaji says in this recording, our resolve and our courage is required. Resting in the Truth of who we are, in the Truth of all that is, I know that we **can** do hard things.

And before we go, let me just briefly say that if you would like to learn more about Gangaji and her offerings, please visit her website at gangaji.org, that's gangaji.org.

Thank you for listening. Until next time.