

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 25
Host Barbara Denempont
When You're Tested by Life
Released September 21, 2020
www.gangaji.org

[00:00] MUSIC

[00:04] GANGAJI: This core of peace is actually very simple, but the human nature goes in many different directions, some of them quite unpleasant. So to recognize at the core there is peace, and that peace is love, and then to actually be a human, with a complex variety of emotions, and thoughts, and choices. Then what is the response?

[00:38] BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. And I am sitting here in my home recording this in Ashland, Oregon, and we are just minutes away from the, from the towns of Talent and Phoenix that have just been literally destroyed in the fires that are happening here in Oregon. And there are so many other places where there are so many challenges, just whether it is climate change, or racial injustice, or what's happening in our elections, and what's happening with this pandemic.

There is a lot that is happening in our human experience. And so "what can I bring today to this podcast?" is really what I ask myself about this very human experience that we have, and how we respond to what life is bringing us. I came across a piece that was recorded in 2008, and in fact it was just recorded prior to the election of Barack Obama. And, of course, if you remember at that time in 2008 there was a lot happening. The economy was crashing, and so we can see in our human experience that things cycle. But perhaps this year, 2020, many of us are perhaps experiencing things that in our lives we've never experienced before, and so that is a profound challenge. And what does it mean? How do we respond? That's the question that Gangaji brings us today.

Let's take a listen.

(Excerpted from Ashland, OR Meeting with Gangaji, October 12, 2008)

[02:31] GANGAJI: Hello everyone, welcome. I've just come back from the East Coast and the Bay Area and it was really interesting to be travelling around offering satsang at a time when the economy was crashing and the election was—is—getting nastier and nastier and a kind of collective angst in our society as a whole. I wouldn't say necessarily in people who are drawn to satsang but as a whole, an agitation.

And I saw that agitation really shows one of two things: either our minds are engaged with that and we're distracted by what is at peace regardless of circumstances, or we're more fully aware of what is at peace regardless of circumstances. It doesn't mean that there's any need to deny what's going on in the world but it's—how does your particular mind react to that? You can see it, you can be upset about it, and you can still know that underneath it all what is true is true. Peace is here. Or you can see it and get agitated by it and have no clue that peace is available at all.

So once again it's the choice of each individual to actually surrender to the peace that's universal, that has nothing to do with the individual. But the individual mind-stream has that choice. And it has been beautiful speaking with people in the midst of such a kind of breakdown in our idea of what our society is, or ideas of what's happening. Just to have that disrupted is important because it will be disrupted at some point. It's the nature of the universe. And so it is here happening in our time. Then we can take responsibility for how we respond to that. When we hear words of hate does it generate hate in us? Or when we hear words of hate are we able to just let them pass through us and recognize what doesn't hate?

Because you know we all have this capacity to transmit our states and we do transmit our states. And if you are following the election, for one example, you see that there are states of extreme agitation and hatred being transmitted. And somehow people finding that and it getting bigger. So we know that in our own lives. I know that directly that people can say things that are very hateful and that generates a response.

So really I would like for this meeting today to be "what is your response?". We live in the core from this truth of Peace that is our nature and our human nature is stacked on top of that. And our human nature is very complex. This core of peace is actually very simple, but the human nature goes in many different directions, some of them quite unpleasant. So to recognize at the core there is peace, and that peace is love, and then to actually be a human, with a complex variety of emotions, and thoughts, and choices. Then what is the response?

So not excluding the peace and not excluding the human-ness. Who are you? What is your life about? What do you want? The same questions of satsang. We gather here in this precious opportunity to be together to support one another in really discovering deeper, always deeper, really, what do you want? Really, what is your life about? And there are these human wants that are—you want to be fed, you want to be protected, you want your savings account to be worth something, you want your candidate to win. But if that becomes where your full attention is, then those wants actually destroy your experience of peace. And if you are unwilling to recognize those wants, then your experience of peace is a denial and a withdrawal from the human experience, and actually doesn't contribute to the human experience. So what's called for is quite mature.

On our new website we're going to have a disclaimer. First of all this is not psychotherapy in any form. I could do a whole meeting on that. And that it's really only appropriate for those people who are willing to take responsibility for their own inner life: their emotions, their responses. That it's not appropriate unless you're mature enough to recognize "this is my response, it has

nothing to do with anyone else". And so it's that maturity that I'm supporting in each of you today so that you can live your life fully as Peace and as a human being with choices.

How that comes about for you, I have no idea. It's not my business. I'm not here to direct that in any way. But I am here to support it. And in our conversations we can actually discover what it is for you concretely that means. So that these are just not a series of abstract statements about peace and humans, but they actually have something to do with this particular human, with your life, your world, however illusory your world may be—and it is, it is all made up. Your experience of it, even scientifically proved now, gets changed every time you remember your world. Every time you remember, you recall something, it's changed. You change it in the recalling it. So that you know by that that your whole past is an illusion. It's changed so many times, gone through so many mutations that your memory of your past is worthless. And the future is just based on that memory of the past so it's totally made up. And however you're interpreting this present you are making it up.

There's a wonderful book I just picked up in New York called *Proust was a Neuroscientist*. It really deals with how art, music and literature and painting have always been right ahead of the discoveries of neuroscience, and just what I said about memory being changed each time you remember it, Proust said that. And Cezanne saw that even the way we see the world is determined by the way we saw the world. So to recognize that all of that is illusion but it is the illusion of your life and still, in the core of that illusion, finally, there is the Peace that cannot be made up because it doesn't have a form. It doesn't even really have the name "peace". That's just a transitory name. It certainly doesn't have any body's name, but it's alive in every body. And my job, which Papaji gave to me, was to invite you into this. Without changing anything in your life, to invite you into the discovery of what's at peace. And in that then to discover what arises to deny that, what arises to go to war, what arises to hate, what arises to attack, and to recognize there is then choice in the individual. So it is not for the faint of heart, not for the weak-minded and not for the immature. I just added that one, so you have five minutes you can leave if you feel any of those fit you, and you will be tested. It's all a test of love.

So, please did that make sense to you? Anyone never been with me before that you would say that didn't make sense and you'd like some clarification? Because that's legitimate. Anyone never heard me before, a CD or DVD? Well I basically just said what I have to say, and I'll say it again. In the core you are Peace, but you are the Peace that is beyond understanding. Not the peace that's relative to conflict. You are the Peace that includes everything. You are the totality of the universe appearing as one particular form for a very brief time and then disappearing back into the totality. So in this brief time, this little spark of life, there is the capacity to recognize yourself as the totality of all of life. Not just the ones you like, not just your side, but the totality of life, the full mandala of life. And to recognize that is to be free, regardless of what appears in your created universe.

[14:16] BARBARA: Before we go, I also want to share with you some very good news. Last month I mentioned that we were doing a fundraising campaign for our Freedom Inside course. And I wanted you to know that we raised \$50,000 for our course that is being made available to

hundreds of prisoners across the U.S. And we're so grateful to the community for making that happen.

And I also want to remind you about the resources and materials available to you on Gangaji's website: gangaji.org, that's gangaji.org

Thanks for listening today. Until next time.