

Gangaji Podcast  
Being Yourself  
Episode 34  
Host Barbara Denempont  
The End of Ignorance is the Gold of Self-Realization  
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GANGAJI: There is nothing that is going on in the world that is not going on in your own mind. And in your willingness to see that, to experience the horror of that, and to see what is untouched by that. Then you are at least one aspect of Consciousness that knows itself to be free. And somehow in that knowledge, living knowledge, which ignores nothing, you make yourself useful to all of life.

BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. This month on our community blog, Dr Michelle Maher, an international speaker on diversity, equality and inclusion, has written a powerful piece for us that addresses awakening in the midst of white supremacy. Now, she speaks about a lot of different things in this article and I really encourage you to read it and there's one aspect of it that I wanted to bring to today's podcast which is using our spiritual realizations to actually perpetuate racism and its cruelties rather than profoundly deepening our meeting with our own self. It's a very powerful discussion and I really wanted to bring it to this month's podcast, so I selected a 1999 recording from Australia. Now, Gangaji isn't speaking specifically about racism here but this monologue really speaks to one of the fundamentals of racism, which is ignorance.

Let's take a listen.

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(Excerpted from Byron Bay, Australia Satsang with Gangaji, April 6, 1999)

GANGAJI: Self-realization is the ending of ignorance, the dispelling of ignorance. "Ignorance" at its root has ignore. Meaning, something is being ignored in ignorance. It is a state of ignoring something. It is not a state of not knowing something, it is a state of ignoring what is primary. What is closer than any knowledge. Ignoring That for some suffering, for some problem, for some identification. And that ignorance is, it is the root of all suffering. So I don't come here to teach you what it is you must be, or see, or even have to get That. But I come here to point as strongly and as clearly as I am able to That which you have ignored in favor of suffering.

There is a spiritual term which has been grossly misunderstood, I believe it must come from some mis-translation. And that is that "ignorance is bliss". Yes, ignorance is not bliss. Open mind is bliss. Not knowing even is bliss. But ignorance, ignoring that which is crucial, ignoring your own Self, ignoring the presence of God, the eternal presence of God, the limitless truth of yourself. Ignoring that is the source of all tragedy. So we will spend very much time together pointing, exposing, diving into what has been ignored in favor of suffering.

So in a moment, in a split second, there is the possibility to recognize the truth of yourself. The boundless, limitless, eternal God truth of yourself, that has been ignored. That has different names, and different spiritual cultures, nirvana, heaven, resurrection, satori, samadhi, enlightenment. And it is beautiful, and empty of suffering, full of grace. I know that

most of you in this room have glimpsed that, and many of you know that to stop for a moment you recognize yourself to be that which you have ignored.

Australia, and certainly Byron itself, it is a very special place on the planet. I know that there have been horrible things that have happened in Australia, and we need not ignore those horrible things as we embrace the truth of our being. There are extremely horrible things that are happening all over the rest of the planet right now. Certainly we are aware of what is happening in Europe, and the horror of that, and the suffering of that. What is happening in the streets of New York, and the horror and suffering of that.

To be true to the eternal truth of who you are is to ignore nothing. To retreat from suffering does not mean to ignore suffering. The retreat is from the fixation on suffering. It doesn't mean you substitute a fixation on nirvana, or emptiness, or samadhi. It means you recognize that you have the potential and the capacity to realize yourself as the totality of life, the totality of being. And to the degree that you are willing to give up your ignorance, both of suffering and of that which has never suffered, is the degree that you are willing to know yourself, to realize yourself.

So I have found in my travels that often people begin the spiritual life as an escape from the worldly life, as an escape from the miseries of life. And this is legitimate. But it is the way one begins, it is not the way one ends. The ending, the surrender, is the recognition of no escape, and no escape needed. That in the embracing of That which is here in consciousness, rather than ignoring any of it. And the embracing of Consciousness with Consciousness Itself. Then there is no longer any of the conditioned belief that you are different from anyone else. That you are less than, or that you are greater than. That because you are a different tribe, that you are better or worse than. Or a different nation, or even enlightened verses ignorant. These distinctions finish, it is all one Self.

I know that you live in paradise, here in Byron, and Australia in general. It is very rare, what is here. And I know you know that. Whether you were born here, or whether you immigrated here. You know the preciousness that is here. But it is useless if you don't recognize yourself as the Totality of Being. If you don't recognize that being here is no escape from what is happening in Kosovo, no escape from what is happening in any ghetto, no escape from what is happening in Africa, South America. That it is all one Self. Your willingness to be true to who you are is your willingness to see yourself everywhere.

I had a beautiful radio interview yesterday, and one of the questions she asked me was, "Does it matter what is going on in the world? That there is hatred, that there is continuing violence, continuing genocide?" Yes it matters. It matters. Because it is a reflection of your own mind. There is nothing that is going on in the world that is not going on in your own mind. And in your willingness to see that, to experience the horror of that, and to see what is untouched by that. Then you are at least one aspect of Consciousness that knows Itself to be free. And somehow in that knowledge, living knowledge, which ignores nothing, you make yourself useful to all of life.

Someone asked Ramana, "Once one has tasted the Divine, what is the purpose in life?" And he said, "To serve society. To be the hands and arms of society." This person was shocked, because he thought it meant just to hang out in the jungle in bliss all of the time. I remember Papaji once, he kept bringing somebody out of samadhi. He would say, "Stop. Stop." And she would start, "Stop". And I was so surprised to see that, you know. And I understand it now, very well. Samadhi is beautiful. Oh, what a hunger we have had for that. How we have ignored that for so long. But if there is clinging, even to samadhi, there is ignorance.

And the gold of self-realization, the gold G-O-L-D, not the goal. The gold of self-realization is the end of ignorance. The willingness to not escape. The willingness to be all, to recognize

all as who one is. So, now you know where I am coming from. Must be very clear, because you must check me out, as I am checking you out. And because I don't want to falsely lead you into thinking that what I offer is an escape, or what I offer is some state of always feeling good or happy. It is not it at all. I am not offering you any yogic prize. I am offering you what you already have at the core of your being. So I am not giving you anything. I don't have the power to give you what you already are. I am offering you, yourself. And I am promising you, it is more than can be dreamed of, or imagined, or thought. And I welcome you and encourage you in this discovery, as we discover this deeper together.

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BARBARA: When I selected this piece, what jumped out for me was when Gangaji said: "To be true to the eternal truth of yourself is to ignore nothing". I absolutely know in the depths of my heart that is the possibility of our inquiry: no escape. And that means we can face the catastrophe of racism, not just politically but perhaps more essentially, spiritually. I invite you to read Dr Maher's article on the community pages and I also wanted to mention that this month, Gangaji's online meeting is going to focus on the question: how can our spiritual inquiry penetrate our racial conditioning? I hope you'll join us for that.

You can find out more information about those offerings and much more by visiting the website [gangaji.org](http://gangaji.org), that's [gangaji.org](http://gangaji.org).

Thank you for listening. My name is Barbara Denemont. Until next time.