

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 37
Host Barbara Denempont
The Power of Illusion. The Illusion of Power
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GANGAJI: So if for one moment, or one year, or one remaining lifetime, you actually tell the truth about what is here, and what appears here, and stays here, and then leaves here, then you live your life in freedom.

BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. Last month I brought you a monologue where Gangaji spoke about entering the space of stillness, and at the very end of the monologue, she reaches out to the audience and invites people to come up, and I wanted to share the exchange that happens immediately after this monologue because it was a wonderful conversation about what it is to find peace or discover peace, and then feel like you've lost it.

Let's take a listen.

(Excerpted from Oakland, CA A Meeting with Gangaji, October 3, 1999)

PARTICIPANT: I have a history of being a clinger.

GANGAJI: A Klinton? You have evolved quite well out of your Klinton state. A clinger?

PARTICIPANT: A clinger.

GANGAJI: A clinger to what?

PARTICIPANT: Beliefs.

GANGAJI: Yes, that is the human condition, that is conditioning, clinging to beliefs. What is the purpose, why would you want to cling to a belief?

PARTICIPANT: I think that it is because I feel there is a power in belief.

GANGAJI: There is.

PARTICIPANT: A creative power.

GANGAJI: There is a huge power, I don't know that it's..... Okay, yes, I can see it is creative. That is right, coz then it creates reality, right? It creates your experience of reality. If your belief is strong enough, then you factor reality through the lens of that belief. And you create your reality. If you believe you are a wretched, wretched creature, then reality will reinforce that. If you believe that you.....

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: Boy, you read me there.

GANGAJI: If you believe nothing about yourself, then what is the experience of reality? If for one moment you drop every belief about yourself?

PARTICIPANT: It feels peaceful.

GANGAJI: Yes, that's right.

PARTICIPANT: and when I drop all thoughts, it feels peaceful.

GANGAJI: Yes, it's the same 'cause belief is made of thoughts.

PARTICIPANT: So, I have been experimenting....

GANGAJI: But before we go into that.

PARTICIPANT: Oh.

GANGAJI: Is there any power in that peace?

PARTICIPANT: Power in the peace, feels good.

GANGAJI: Feels good.

PARTICIPANT: And I like it.

GANGAJI: Yes, it is likeable, but this issue is around power, isn't it? We can later get into what the need for power is. But in this place of peace, is there power, do you have personal power?

PARTICIPANT: My mind tells me that I should say "yes".

GANGAJI: But you know that is not so. There is no personal power there, is it? There is no person there.

PARTICIPANT: Oh, I see.

GANGAJI: In the moment of no belief, no thought, just the peace, just a split second before the mind co-opts it and makes it a thing, there is no power. There is just peace. And the minute you say, "My peace. So I found this peace, or now I have the power to get to this peace," this is a different matter. Because then that is the struggle again, isn't it? "Oh, oh I lost the peace, how do I get it, who is keeping this peace from me?" And, "What do I need to believe to get this peace back?"

PARTICIPANT: Well, I want to know what do I unbelieve? Everything?

GANGAJI: Everything. It is very simple what you unbelieve, everything. The complication, and the struggle comes in when you begin to select, "Well, I will keep this belief, but I not this one. Well, this one I can't let that one go, because then I would be powerless." I understand that, you know, when you have been a Klingon, power is a big issue. When you have evolved as a human being, power is a huge issue. I am not anti-power, power is beautiful, and power is appropriate in appropriate moments. But when the moment appears in your life, where you say..... What did you say when you started out, what was your first....?

PARTICIPANT: I said I have been in, my history has been that I have been a clinger to beliefs.

GANGAJI: Yes, and in saying that, you are saying, "What is beyond that? What is possible without belief?" Then you are on the edge of what is generally considered intolerable for most human beings. Especially human beings who have actually learned what it is to accumulate some power. It is like, "Not that. It is just now getting good, not that." And yet there is a curiosity, or there is a resonance, that is saying, "What is beyond power? What is more than that? What if I don't do my maintenance work on my power?"

PARTICIPANT: Is it allowance?

GANGAJI: Allowance? I am not sure, what do you mean by that?

PARTICIPANT: Well, there is

GANGAJI: Is that what you are experiencing?

PARTICIPANT: Where there has been a series of events that a certain group close to me is saying that I created this.

GANGAJI: Oh gosh well, yes.

PARTICIPANT: This experience....

GANGAJI: I know that one, that is my problem too.

PARTICIPANT: That is your problem?

GANGAJI: Yes, there is a certain group that says, "Wow, you created this experience."

PARTICIPANT: Okay.

GANGAJI: Don't touch it! Don't believe it for a second, don't believe it, don't believe it. It has nothing to do with you. The moment you believe it, you consulate yourself as some individual who is in charge of experiences. And then the mob will turn on you. When the experience shifts, they will come for you.

PARTICIPANT: Ah.

GANGAJI: Yes, now for a moment that is peace, "Ah". For a moment whatever they are saying about you, "Oh, hallelujah, you did it." Or, "Oh, you wretch, you did it". Has nothing to do with you. It is simply what is being said, and you are at peace.

PARTICIPANT: And that is what I meant by allowing, is that as I see it, that whatever happens in my life, is an allowance.

GANGAJI: Oh, wonderful.

PARTICIPANT: Not me making this happen.

GANGAJI: YES. What an allowance.

PARTICIPANT: But then I guess what my problem is that I start listening to these people talk to me.....

GANGAJI: Well, listen to them, but don't answer them. Do you understand? Yes you do, I can see. You really have touched on something so profound.

PARTICIPANT: So then it is not to my fault, it is not to my credit.

GANGAJI: YES. That is right.

PARTICIPANT: It is just what is.

GANGAJI: It is what is, and what is then? What is? Because we can talk about, "Well, it appears to be that either people are waking up around me, or people are going to sleep around me. It appears, one or the other. And if that doesn't have anything to do with me, that is just what is." Then the investigation can really begin. Because the investigation can then be turned toward either, "Who am I?" Or, "Then what really is?" What is really happening here? If the investigation is around, "Oh, did I do it?" Or, "If I did do it, can I keep doing it?" Or, "Oh, if I did it, should I have done it?"

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: Then there is no allowance for investigating the deeper questions.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

GANGAJI: Very beautiful, this is so exquisite when this question gets asked. We are very locked into making things happen. That is part of our culture to make things happen, and that is severely limited by what we think things to be, what we think happens to be, and who we think we are to make things happen. It is okay to play, like kids playing in making a house out of a cardboard box, and playing and having a wonderful time making it happen. But in the moment of truth, where you step back from the play, and you ask the real questions, "Who am I? What is this really? What is happening?"

PARTICIPANT: When I ask any question, I am, I would like to know whether the answers are coming from my mind or from Truth?

GANGAJI: Well, it is very skillful to assume it is coming from your mind.

PARTICIPANT: That is what I am suspicious of.

GANGAJI: Yes good, that suspicion also comes from your mind. But the answers, the "yes's", the "no's", the "maybe's", the suspicions about those answers, all come from mind. And mind comes from what? What is mind arising in?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know, but I think there is a purpose for my mind, and I don't want to just like cut it off. So I would like to integrate it, I mean, it sounds reasonable...

GANGAJI: You cut it off, you will grow two more.

PARTICIPANT: But I would like to.....

GANGAJI: Pruning only makes it stronger, so don't cut it off. I am not suggesting you cut it off. Just stop feeding it for a week or two.

PARTICIPANT: I have been experimenting with that, it feels pretty good.

GANGAJI: It is a revelation. It is a revelation. We are so conditioned that we have to continue to fertilize this mind plant, so that it gets bigger, and bigger, and bigger. So that it will be stronger, and stronger, and stronger, so that it can take over the planet. To do good, of course, to fix the planet. But it is the problem, but it is not inherently the problem. It is just a plant growing, it has been over fertilized. If you just stop feeding it for a while, let it die back. Let it die back. Then what we fear most, which gets called "winter" usually, or "death", or the "dark night", what we fear most reveals to hold the most sublime treasure. So, we are deathly afraid of losing our minds, and in the frenzy of that fear, we have lost the discernment, we have lost the clarity, we have lost the wisdom that mind participates in. So in the willingness to stop, just to let it all die back, there can be discovered that which is trustworthy. Which does not have to do with thought, with a "yes", or a "no", or a "maybe". Does not have to do with knowledge or ignorance. Presence of being. Simply being, this is the resting place.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: And I get there sometimes.

GANGAJI: Yes, you know this very well, you did not have to consider it. You did not have to think about it, and say, "Well, yes." And....?

PARTICIPANT: And, even though I am there sometimes, I guess this is my clingy part, I'd like to be there all of the time.

GANGAJI: Okay, so how do you know that you are not there all of the time?

PARTICIPANT: It is harder for me to breathe into my body...

GANGAJI: When you are not there?

PARTICIPANT: That is what it seems like, that is my little....

GANGAJI: Okay. So if your breath just stops, like just right now, hold your breath. Are you holding it, just for a..... Good. Now tell me, you can nod or shake your head. Have you lost any part of yourself? Well, check and see. No. So you can breathe now. Breath is also a beautiful power, but especially in our New Age culture, it has been worshipped as the ultimate power. Because it is what keeps the body, the tissue, alive. But it is not the tissue of the body that I am speaking of, it is You. You give animation to the breath. You give animation to the mind. You are Peace. You can rest in Yourself at any moment, because regardless of what else is here, You are here always. Breath rises and falls, breath is constricted or full. Breath began at some point in time, and will end in some point in time.

PARTICIPANT: So I am not necessarily my breath.

GANGAJI: You are absolutely not your breath. But your breath is filled with You. It is not that, You are not your breath, but your breath is You.

PARTICIPANT: Does my breath carry me, is that....?

GANGAJI: Well, you investigate it.

PARTICIPANT: Okay.

GANGAJI: The purpose of investigation is to stop, is to bring the mind back in. To stop making the breath the ruler of the universe, to stop making the tree of the mind the ruler of the universe, the body the ruler of the universe, last week's enlightenment the ruler of the universe. The purpose of investigation is to see what is unchangeable. What is changeable, and what is unchangeable.

PARTICIPANT: But then if I create a belief system about what is changeable or unchangeable, then I get caught in that.

GANGAJI: That is right. But you see it. You see, isn't that great? You caught it.

PARTICIPANT: I am growing up.

GANGAJI: Yes, it is a kind of growing up, that is right.

PARTICIPANT: Or waking up.

GANGAJI: A waking up is a growing up out of this illusion of childhood. We have also worshipped childhood, "Oh, if I could just get back to that." There is no going back to that. The recognition of what was recognized there in its purity, as still being here, this is infinitely better than childhood. To recognize that even if your breath is constricted and tight, You are free, then the breath can be loved for what it is. Then it does not have to be a certain way to prove that You have worth. You have worth, period. You are beyond measure in your worth. And your breath is of great value, but it will be finished someday. That means, it will end. You, that which the breath gets its power from, cannot end. And you can know this for yourself, and you do know it for yourself. But you have forgotten it, or covered it, or denied it, or thought, "It could not be that. That simple, that easy, that present, not that!" It is THAT. So if for one moment, or one year, or one remaining lifetime, you actually tell the truth about what is here, and what appears here, and stays here, and then leaves here, then you live your life in freedom. You live your life in Truth, you live your life knowing that, "Even though my breath changes, and my feelings change, and my body changes, this Peace does not change." It is here, always. And you are quite correct when you say you want that always. That is what everyone wants. Well you have it, always. If you will just stop looking for it in your breath, or your body, or your mind.

PARTICIPANT: Or in any picture.

GANGAJI: Or in any picture, which is an image, which is imagination....

(Heavy sigh.)

GANGAJI: You see? Then instantly, just as It reveals Itself this moment, you are Home.

BARBARA: So much ground is covered in this particular exchange. I so appreciate everyone's willingness to share their hearts. Before I go, I wanted to mention that Gangaji's September monthly meeting is happening this Sunday, September 12. The theme of the meeting is, "Let yourself be Found" and Gangaji is going to actually carry that theme into her October weekend retreat, that's October 2nd and 3rd. You can learn more about these two events that are coming up at: gangaji.org, that's gangaji.org. I truly hope you can join our conversation, join our inquiry together into just simply, letting yourself be found.

Thanks so much for listening. This is Barbara Denempont. Until next time.