

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 53
Host Barbara Denempont
The Most Important Question
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GANGAJI: So this divine question that comes to you from Ramana—Who Am I?—is the invitation to face that I that you think yourself to be directly.

BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. Today I want to share with you a recording taken from a meeting held in Marin back in 1997, twenty-five years ago, and still this piece is absolutely timeless. And as I listen to Gangaji read two beautiful and profound letters of realization, I am truly flattened by the gift that self-inquiry is, what is possible when we simply stop asking why or how and finally just ask who?

(Excerpted from Marin County, CA Satsang with Gangaji, January 19, 1997)

GANGAJI: Welcome to Satsang. Before you speak I have a couple of letters I want to read:

I spoke to you in Marin last year of hearing you in meditation saying "You have chosen love. Your life is no longer your own. All your plans will be replaced by trust." These months since your last visit have worked to expose and peel the layers of plans I'd thought and felt were who I was. These notions kept rising, including the notion of being someone who lets go of plans, and they were met with ceaseless unsentimental silence. By December I sank into despair, no longer safe with my cushy deadening ideas. I felt I was dying and would not survive. Finally I gave up hope of ever feeling good or better or even alive, and there was the jewel. All of what I thought could help save or comfort me showed itself as hollow. In giving up, in surrendering, I fell deeper and deeper into this precious pearl of loving only what is always known, me and a million other secrets. Not what I have known but what has known me. Such joy to be known instead of trying so violently to know. Thank you for your tender lack of mercy in this. Thank you for your gracious presence in my heart. You feel like a sledge hammer cracking open deeper and deeper, heart within heart, within my heart of hearts.

Very good. Very important. It relates to this other letter that I got. This is someone who has never been in physical formal satsang.

I'm writing to you to say thank you and to ask a question. First, I have read your books and listened to your tapes and there's no way to tell you how much change has occurred in my life. Please accept many, many thanks. My question is this. In turning to face fear, when I drop the story line that supports the fear, there is nothing there. Yes - ha ha ha. This has been such a relief and actually quite funny at times. As I have begun to do this more and

more, I am seeing more deeply how much emotions have always run wild in my mind and have directed and controlled my life. In You Are That you say concerning fear of death, relax, fear is a good sign. If people tell me they have never felt fear, I realize they have probably not touched this primal fear. You also suggest that people turn and experience their fear of death. Every time I turn to face the fear, it is nowhere to be found. Am I missing something? Do I need to go deeper? The fear is only present when my mind clings to the story line. Actually, any emotion that I experience is only present when my mind clings to the story line. As I said before, this has been such a regular thing in my life that I can see how much difficulty and suffering there is in living a life directed by emotion. In facing this and dropping the story, there is nothing. I believe that this is actually what you are teaching but I cannot experience my fear of death directly because as I said, when I drop the story line, it is gone. I have an eight-month-old son. He is healthy and we have had no scares with his health. My mind has at times created frightening scenarios concerning him but once again, when I drop the story there is nothing.

So I wrote him back as quickly as I could. This is it. This is exactly it. When you face an emotion rather than assuming it to be real and then working with it, doing something with it, fixing it, changing it, denying it, dramatizing it, when you simply face it as it is, it is discovered to be nothing. The same of course is true with the idea of who you are. When you face that idea directly with no story line about what will be gained or lost or what has been gained or lost, you will see there is nobody there. The I that you think yourself to be is nothing. It does not exist. It is made up and practiced and continued only by vigilance in not facing it.

So this divine question that comes to you from Ramana—Who Am I?—is the invitation to face that I that you think yourself to be directly. As this man so beautifully writes, you will find in truth you cannot face it directly because when you are willing to face it directly, it is revealed to be not there. Not present. Not existent. This is unbelievable because it is out of the realm of the mind's experience. It is realizable because it is totally within the realm of your experience. You are not your mind. You are what is revealed when who you think you are is revealed to be non-existent. So the burden of your story, the burden of your thoughts of who you are, the burdens of your emotions of who you are, are realized to be nothing. I'm not denying the experience that they have been something. Obviously the experience is universal. No need to deny the experience. No need to indulge the experience. The need is simply meet the experience of I and see for yourself what is revealed. This man's letter speaks of and flows with the delight in that revelation. He didn't write me saying, "Well, I faced my fear once and it was revealed to be non-existent but why did it come up again?" That's a familiar question, people have brought that up here.

So the way I see it from what we have been speaking of in these six or seven satsangs is that the mind takes hold of several questions. Why is where the mind can run the fastest in all directions. Right? It's not great esoteric knowledge it is just your own experience. When you ask why, when you begin to search for the whys, well you see how many millions of years it takes to accumulate all the theories, all the speculations, all the possibilities, all the counter-possibilities, to collect the experiences, the consensus, the Eastern understanding why, the Western understanding why, the atheist understanding why, the rational scientific understanding why, the Gnostic understanding why, the Christian understanding why. And then the splintering of all those. So you see why is a question made for mental activity. Nothing wrong with that. I'm not speaking of wrongness here. And then of course as we

spoke the other day, how is a question that deepens the mind's search so that the very structure of the mind begins to be revealed - the habits, the fixations, the tendencies, beliefs, and finally when you give the mind the question who, where can the mind go with that? How far can it get? So this is not just a who that is mental as this letter shows, this is a who that is also emotional, it is a who that is physical, it is a who that is circumstantial, when it is met as it is, it is revealed to be no-thing at all. But not nothing, because the mind can then spin with that. Oh nothing, that's nihilistic, that's horrible, that's terrible. Oh nothing, that's nobody, dead, blank. Not nothing but no-thing. Not something. Not nothing. No-thing. And this that is revealed in this direct meeting, in direct inquiry, is the radiant truth of your being. It is no-thing at all and that no-thing is radiant, endless, immeasurable depth of being. So for our time together let us forget the whys, they can be fun, you know sitting around a campfire, making up stories, ghost stories. They can be instructional. But for our purpose, which is the purpose of discovering the truth of who one is, let us forget why one is and discover who and then from that, that which is already deeper than can be measured somehow is experienced deeper yet. Not made deeper, not becomes deeper, but experiences itself deeper. Then that could be a very good why of this whole business, this whole business of forgetting and remembering, losing and finding. This divine experience of deepening no-thing at all.

BARBARA:

As I wrap up this final episode of *Being Yourself* for 2022, I want to say thank you. Thank you to you for listening and thank you for bringing your attention to what is alive in the heart of All Being. I promise it is as meaningful to the world as it is to your own life. I also want to thank all of our donors who have made sure this podcast is produced and made available to so many thousands of people all around the world every month. It's such a deep joy to collaborate as a community in sending out a message of peace to the world, a message that offers sanity and inclusiveness. And if you would like to participate in our efforts as a volunteer or you would like to give as a donor, I invite you to that, I welcome you to that. You can start by simply going to the website, Gangaji.org that's Gangaji.org. You can visit the Donate page or the Get Involved pages of the site as well as just browse through more the podcast, the videos, the blogs. There's so much there. The community has created a true oasis of support for all of us.

Again, thank you for listening. I am Barbara Denempont. Until next year.