

Gangaji Podcast  
Being Yourself  
Episode 59  
Host Barbara Denempont  
Healing The Ego is Not Self Realization  
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GANGAJI: You give up hope that you will be saved, that you will get it, and in that giving up hope, before you slide into the hopelessness and the narrative that goes with that, poor-me and never and I can't, there is this spaciousness.

BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. A couple of weeks ago, we returned from a silent retreat held at Fallen Leaf Lake, one of our most beloved places on the planet, and during that beautiful, precious gathering, Gangaji spoke about the essential difference between psychotherapy and self-inquiry. In psychotherapy, we work to heal our mental and emotional bodies, to fix the wiring in our brain perhaps caused by trauma, but in self-inquiry the purpose is altogether different. The purpose is to discover the truth of who you are, to discover what is already whole and complete, what is already here and has absolutely no need of fixing. And I knew this was a really important monologue to share with you as soon as I got out of the meeting. So, I am so happy I get to share it today with you.

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(Excerpted from Fallen Leaf Lake, CA, Silent Retreat, May 24, 2023)

GANGAJI: There is so much we can do to develop our egos when they have been shattered as children or with trauma events, really, wonderful skills, more and more skills all the time as that is being revealed. I mean trauma is the big psychotherapeutic movement right now. So that's like great, great, who isn't traumatized? And of course, we know some people are extremely traumatized and there are tools, useful tools. But they don't have anything to do with realization. It's really important to recognize that. And the truth is, I am not saying you don't have residual trauma in your life, we probably all do in our nervous systems, just agitation or fear or helplessness or some kind of residue of unwanted events anyway. And of course, that goes to the extreme of rape and war and torture - the extremes of what humans have done to each other and have had done to themselves.

So that's, I support that and that's part of what I see as psychotherapy, therapeutic intervention – really useful. And we have all benefitted from that because that's basically the church that we live in. I always share, I feel like I have to continue to share this book I read some years ago called "A Distant Mirror" and it was about the fourteenth century. Really, that's a long time ago. That's the thirteen hundreds. And this was in France and she just followed, through research, this particular nobleman. But what came forth in the book of course was what this person was living in. What was the culture, the soup they were living in, and the primary ingredient of the soup at that time was the Catholic church. Whether you were a peasant or whether you were the king, the Catholic church was your indoctrination and that is what you believed and that was your soup. And, of course, in time, the reformation came and different things happened and that's no longer true. But what is true is psychotherapy is our church. It's not as bad as the Catholic church was. It is still trying to help. I mean the intentions of the Catholic church started out of course as really pure and then were co-opted by, you know, humanity, greed, desire to control, to fix, to save, to help. The same thing with psychotherapy. You find the right psycho-therapist, you are in a

relationship and you are supported in your psychotherapeutic healing and that's wonderful. Sometimes people come to *Satsang* expecting more of that or maybe an elevated example of that. So many times, in these thirty-plus years of speaking to people, I have had to remind everyone, this is not psychotherapy and you may need psychotherapy. It's not anti-psychotherapy. But this has nothing to do with fixing you. This has nothing to do with erasing your past or changing your past, as useful as that may be.

This has to do with discovering, fully and completely, what is always here and was always here – in the worst moments, in the best moments. It's not about getting more best moments because both worst and best come and go. That's the nature of experience, phenomenal experience. We feel good or we feel bad. It's a cloudy day or it's a sunny day. It's cold, it's hot. I'm happy, I'm sad. All of that phenomenal experience comes and goes. Like it or not, it comes and goes. And if we don't waste our energy either liking it or not liking it, I mean, there will be an initial, "Oh no, I feel bad again!" But not wasting your energy following that with, "I always come back to this. I always feel bad. This is what's always here." (Audience laughter) Just to stop for a moment and tell the truth. Really, inquiry is about telling the truth. The questions of inquiry really direct you, direct your attention to the truth: do you always every moment feel bad? No. Do you always every moment feel good? No. Okay, so it's not about good or bad because they come and go. Do you always feel brave? No. Do you always feel weak? No. So, they come and go. Do you always feel seen? No. Do you always feel not seen? No. So that comes and goes. And we could go on and on with the list of what most people are looking for: to never feel bad, to always feel seen, to be happy and that's a sort of indoctrination, a kind of catechism that we have hope that this elevated psychotherapy called *Satsang* will give us that. Yeah. So that's just part of the programming we bring to it like this book just showed the day-to-day immersion that was, whether they attended church or not, that was their life. That defined their life.

And so, you can discover if the psychotherapeutic model, without making it right or wrong, is defining your life. Maybe it has in a good sense. It's maybe pulled you out of a pit and supported you in actually being able to ask some difficult questions. Great. And maybe you will continue with your psychotherapy. Great. But what our meeting is about is not that. It's closer. It's always here. You are always here and all the rest is weather: cloud formations, sun, rain, cold, weather, seasons. Maybe affected by climate change or affected by the pollution in your area or affected by whatever, changes that you can either fix or not fix. But there is that which is unaffected by all those affects and that is who you are. And this is always about discovering who you are regardless of how bad you are, good you are, insane you are, sane you are. Who you are. Not the how's, the who. Then it takes care of itself. Some people are sometimes shocked to see that I have a lot of bad habits. I mean, I don't see them as bad, they see them as bad. I think chocolate is a sacrament actually. (Gangaji and audience laugh) So there is this idea, you know, when I get healed or when I awaken, I will be different. I won't be bothered by changes, by phenomenal experience. That idea itself is part of a narrative. If you are willing to recognize that, that that is a sentence that appears in your mind and then is followed: "Yeah, that will be great! I will never feel bad again. I will always be good. People will always love me." You just unravel that. You give up hope that you will ever be good again. You give up hope that you will be saved, that you will get it, and in that giving up hope, before you slide into the hopelessness and the narrative that goes with that, poor-me and never and I can't, there is this spaciousness that has nothing to do with anything else and yet everything else only exists because of that space.

Pure consciousness aware of itself through this particular form. It's really good news. Really good news and it is available for you. And you want it. And maybe you thought you would get a little psychotherapy when you came here but you knew actually because I would assume everyone here has at least heard me speak once either through video or in person or podcast or something. You know that's not what is being offered here. It's not, it is not

being rejected here, but it is not what is here. And there can be psychotherapeutic offshoots of just the conversations we have but that is not what is being offered.

This is a big deal. When I met Papaji, I had been into a lot of things. I never did extensive psychotherapy but I knew enough about psychotherapy to utilize what was in the popular culture and the enneagram and all these things of seeing myself as object -very useful – the strengthening of this person that gives the person the capacity to actually meet death, that there will come a time when this person will be no more. How startling and then to have my teacher you know, say, “Stop both your enlightenment and your un-enlightenment. Lose everything.” It was terrifying to me. I knew I had accumulated a really lot of good things. I had, you know, I had a six shooter. I had a knife. I had flowers. I had candy. I had all kinds of good things and he was saying, basically, be naked. Don't have anything. Don't have your sanity. Don't have your madness. Surrender your identity. And our identity is formulated by the narrative that we attend to in our heads since we are babies because that's the way human beings are made.

This is what is before that, the very consciousness and spirit of life. So, not a religion, not psychotherapy – no name. Ramana called it inquiry. That's a beautiful word, inquiry. Although then people take Ramana's words and they practice inquiry and it becomes a thing, a quasi-religion. That's what humans do though. You can expect that. That's what I meant when I said that you will fail. You have to fail because that's immediate feedback. It's like, “Oh my God, I objectified this again. I made this mine. I made this for me. I made it for my narrative.” That's crazy. The human species is crazy. It has gone crazy with its own power. Rather than surrendering, it has, you know, become inflated and we see the results of that all over the globe, in every family, in every neighborhood, in every body. But there is this that has always been here that remains untouched, pure, pristine, unthought, present in every thought – and that's who you are regardless of what your features are in this particular lifetime. That's who you are. And that's great news but the greatest news is you can realize that. It's not you have to believe that, you do not have to worship that, that's who I am, consciousness, oh consciousness. It's much more simple. And that's what keeps it a challenge for most people. It's really not complicated. It's just giving up everything. (Laughter) But couldn't I keep... No, everything! Everything. Oh, no, well that would be hard... Give that up! That's giving up future. And to give up future, you have to give up past. Then it is quite clear.

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BARBARA: I think I like this monologue so much because when I met Gangaji I felt so broken. I felt that there was so much that needed to be fixed – and there were things that needed to be fixed – but she was the first and only person I had ever met who encouraged me to stop fixing myself for just one moment and see what is already here. That was the life-changing moment. So I share that same encouragement with you.

Let me also remind you that there is a wealth of material on the website to support you in your spiritual inquiry: podcasts, videos, blogs, monthly gatherings with Gangaji and so much more.

I also want to take a moment to thank everyone who responded to my call to support the spiritual inquiry of prisoners. We had a beautiful response and we are still fundraising. We just had fifty new prisoners join the program in May. It is definitely growing and we do need support from the community to make it all work. So if you would also like to connect in that way, you can also go to the website [Gangaji.org](http://Gangaji.org) that's [Gangaji.org](http://Gangaji.org).

We all need support and thankfully, here we all are.

Thank you for listening. I am Barbara Denempont. Until next time.