

Gangaji Podcast  
Being Yourself  
Episode 60  
Host Barbara Denempont  
Entangled in the Search for a Better Identity  
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GANGAJI: The error is that you are what can be thought, or perceived, or felt rather than the truth, which You are That in which all thoughts, all perceptions, all feelings appear in.

BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. Looking back on my spiritual path, I can't actually say my spiritual path was that spiritual. I wasn't seeking enlightenment. That wasn't the identity I was hoping for – to be the enlightened one – but I was searching for something that could give me comfort and happiness. That was my holy grail. You may not be surprised to hear I did not find my holy grail but I did meet Gangaji and she dared me to give up the grail and see what is really here, what remains? So, I am sharing with you this monologue because I love how Gangaji speaks about the entanglement we can find ourselves in when we are searching for a better identity instead of simply being ourselves.

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(Excerpted from A Meeting with Gangaji, Marin County, CA, October 20, 2002)

GANGAJI: I was speaking to a group of people the other day about something someone recently had shared with me, and this is someone who has been hearing me speak for at least five years. This is just so you will understand the problem I have to deal with. She had read a book, a self-help book, one of these books where you take the test, you take a test, you know, and then you add up the score and you see whether you are below average in evolution, average in evolution, or extremely evolved. And she was quite upset, because she had gone into the test thinking she was extremely evolved and took the test, and showed that she is only average. She was really upset about this, and I was speechless. I realized I should remain speechless, but... Because there was such a primary misunderstanding there, that I really want to address, again.

So any test that is taken in any book, whether it is a geography book, or a self-help book, or a spiritual book, anything that can be ranked or graded or evaluated or put into levels, has to do with mind. Either the mental mind, in this case the perception she had of herself, or the emotional mind, or the physical mind. All three are operating all the time. One with the brain, one with the biochemistry, neuropeptides, the sense perception, just the proprioception, just very complex thing this mind. It's wondrous and beautiful, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with it. There is nothing wrong with tests in books. If you are interested in geography, you take geography tests and then you see how much you really know about geography. And if you see you only know average and you want to know a lot, you study geography more. That's legitimate activity. If you are interested in cultivating a garden, you know, you work in the garden, you read garden books, you speak to other gardeners, and maybe there is one of these books that has a test in it, and you take the test and you see. And you find out. It is legitimate, and it is also legitimate to tend to the garden of your mind, whether it is physical, emotional, or mental.

But the invitation that I am bringing you, what I was asked to bring you, is that none of that is who you are. All of that is who you think you are, or who you believe yourself to be, in the most subtle, sub-conscious way. And that is called "identification with yourself" as a body/mind, as a thought, as sense perception. Nothing wrong with that, that is part of the play, the entertainment, the theater, the occupation. But the error in that that goes overlooked and then generates huge suffering in most lives, even lives that are quite successful mentally, physically, emotionally, huge suffering, unnecessary suffering. The error is that you are what can be thought, or perceived, or felt rather than the truth, which You are That in which all thoughts, all perceptions, all feelings, appear in and disappear back into.

This is a very simple invitation. However, it is a radical invitation, and since it is so radical and so simple, obviously it is bound to be misunderstood as some thing to get you a better personality, or a better test score, in the spiritual realm, the A++ being enlightened, F being ignorant again. You know, I taught in school and I gave tests, and tests can be very useful, but they have nothing to do with who you are. Nothing. Because we are so trained to find ourselves in thought, or in sense perception, or in some emotional constellation, it is very hard, or it seems very hard to let that go. We have hoped that if we just make all of those better, if we make the body better, if we can just make the body immortal, or disease free, or attractive, whatever level you are playing from, from evolved to very un-evolved. Or if we can just get, you know, the thought to stay steady, "I am one with everything," or, "If I could just get the sense perception to always be "one with all," or "Happy," or "Safe," or "Enlightened." But what stopped me in my tracks, what stopped the mind activity of this organism and the grading and the checking and the doing something to get a better grade, was my teacher, my teacher saying, "Stop." And recognizing the fear that was here and really accepting that invitation, because it, who knew what it would mean? It could mean I would go to hell, at a primitive level. It could mean all that I had accumulated and all of my A+'s would just be lost. And they were good things, I had worked hard for those A+'s, I thought. It could mean that I would be brainwashed, it could mean... Who knew what it could mean? It was terrifying when I really meant the invitation, whether than just danced around it. "Oh wonderful, what a beautiful guru telling me to stop! Whoa. Yes, yes. More, more, more." I heard him. And I heard myself respond to that, "Well, yes. Now." And the revelation, the life that has followed that is indescribable. And yet still, I don't, I am certain that I have not really communicated what that invitation is, the communication, of course, being a two-way dance. I understand that I have said it a number of times, and I understand that there have been huge glimpses. But when this beautiful soul said that to me, of her anguish in discovering that after all of this she's only average. It's, whoa, well let's start over. And I realize that's the key.

If you don't accumulate anything, any high score you have ever gotten in any realm, or any low score you have ever gotten in any realm, because somebody else could have reported, "Hey! I checked out very evolved," and I would have been just as dismayed. If you don't accumulate that which can be scored as reference to who you ARE, what's left? Just for a moment, what's left? For a split second, what's left? What remains? What is immeasurable, ungradable, unrankable?

There are tremendous byproducts to this revelation. And one of the byproducts is usually there is a kind of leap in evolution. Not always, but a clarity of intellectual and sensory and emotional perception. It's just another challenge to see if you are identified with that. Sometimes there can be a regression. I know there was a period when I was with Papaji where, I think I was like the equivalent of a nine-year-old girl. Just tongue tied and stupid and like uncomfortable in my body, and it was like I was falling on the evolutionary scale rather than ascending. And it was another beautiful invitation to tell the truth about who I am. In that moment this garden that I had tilled, or this lesson that I had worked so hard on was going to seed, was obsolete, disappearing. And I know that each of you has at least the moment

before you drop into sleep at night, at least that moment where everything falls away, that instant where only you as you are remains.

So my purpose in inviting you here is to confirm that that is always present. That that is not a sense perception, not a thought, not a feeling, and yet not separate from any sense perception, evolved or regressed. Any thought, negative or positive. Any emotion, the whole spectrum. It is simple, right? Isn't it? Is it? And often it is very clear in a setting like this, where the whole context of the setting is to tell the truth about what cannot be thought, has never been thought. What is before and after any sense perception, or emotion, or circumstance. That's part of the power of a gathering like this. The whole context of this gathering is simply telling the truth about who you are. Not how you rank, you don't rank. It's nothing to do with ranking. Not whether you are enlightened or ignorant, it is nothing to do with enlightenment or ignorance. Nothing. That's a mind game. But who you ARE. Not whether you are happy or sad, nothing to do with that. Nothing. Isn't it a relief? Yes, thank you. Don't you recognize it? And it got covered in your learning and grading and categorizing and ranking, in choosing or being chosen for, which level? Level of heaven, level of hell, level of enlightenment, level of ignorance. It's all in the mind, all of it. And the mind is in You. You are not in the mind. An image that you call yourself is mental, an emotion that you may have, an emotion that is in the mind, a physical touch or experience is in the mind, but the mind is in YOU. Any questions about that?

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BARBARA: I know I say this a lot, but it truly is my joy to share these recordings with you. What a blessing. And of course, you can share them with the world as well just by sharing a review on Apple podcasts or wherever you listen to podcasts.

I also wanted to mention that we will be having a retreat in Ashland this October. It's a four-day retreat being held on October 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 and for that retreat we are going to be adding a special evening program on Saturday to celebrate the volunteers and donors that have been sending Gangaji's invitation to peace around the world for the last thirty years. You can learn more about the October retreat at [Gangaji.org](http://Gangaji.org) that's [Gangaji.org](http://Gangaji.org) and you can also check out the 2024 calendar that we just posted.

As always, I thank you for listening. This is Barbara Denempont. Until next time.