

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 65
Host Barbara Denempont
Facing Death is Facing Life
Released December 15, 2023
www.gangaji.org

GANGAJI: Fear of not being actually, and believing that fear, and following that fear, and the strategies that arise from that fear. That fear actually keeps you from experiencing what being is. Isn't that ironic? That fear of death keeps you from the experience of life.

BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont.

Typically, I like to listen back to each piece from the archive before I sit down and record this introduction and today as I listened, I just felt so profoundly lucky. Lucky because somehow quite unexpectedly, I met someone who was willing and able to encourage and support me in walking all the way to the end of the spiritual path and by that I mean she invited me to face death, not just a physical death, but the death of any idea of me or what I think my life should be. And that was so that I might discover directly for myself that what I truly want is what I truly have and that is a blessing beyond measure.

Now I get to share that good luck with you. Let's take a listen to this meeting recorded in Stinson Beach, California in 1998.

(Excerpted from A Meeting with Gangaji, Stinson Beach, California, 1998)

GANGAJI: People in spiritual circles often say that they want to open. Right? That is one of the things, "I just want to open. I just want to surrender. I just want to let go." So, if this is said, why is it that it is, or has been, rare. That if there is real opening, real letting go, real surrendering, what is the truth of what is going on here? Because if you really want to be open, you are open. Because you are open, at the core. So, you are saying, "I really want to be who I am." But you must have noticed that there is something else going on: some struggle, some fight, some lie, something not quite accurate in saying, "I want to be open." In the saying it, you can experience perhaps the fear that comes up, or the terror, or the excuses for why you can't be open just right yet. Or, the blame for who is in fact keeping you closed. (Audience laughter)

Yes, we laugh at these things because they are absurd. And yet they have such a hold that hold is called "conditioning". That belief that your mind's control is what gives you life, joy, the experience of being. There is nothing wrong with the mind's control, it is not that it is the evil power. But it has nothing to do with what gives you

life, and joy, and the presence of being. And so this struggle, you know we talk about, "I want to surrender, and I can't surrender." I remember even Bob Dillon had a great song, "I want to let go and I can't let go, I want to let go and I can't let go." Is really once again the fear of death. We can call it the fear of the "unknown" because that makes it, you know, have more fluff to it. But it is the fear of death. The fear of dying. The fear of not being who you think you are. However horrible that might be. At least there is some semblance of security in that thought, and some hope that someday there will be release. But the hope is that the thought will change, that the thought will turn into, "Oh, now I am enlightened. Now I am free. Now I am surrendered." So there is a waiting on the thought to get it. But thought can't get it. Thought is not equipped to get it. So this fear of death, the fear of not being actually, and believing that fear, and following that fear, and the strategies that arise from that fear. That fear actually keeps you from experiencing what being is. Isn't that ironic? That fear of death keeps you from the experience of life, fully, and completely, immediately. And all of the dealing around that, "Well someday. Well when. Well if "they". Well if "she". Well if "he". Well if my thoughts." Is all some kind of attempt to avoid the experience of not being. And the avoidance of the experience of "not being" keeps you from the experience of being. Eternally being. Was that clear?

I will say it again. The strategies and the avoidance around the experience of "not being", or death, is what keeps you from the experience of eternal life. So finally, all spiritual teaching that is really interested in pointing you to what is eternal, points you to the experience of death. You know, it is called death of the ego, but then the ego splits and says, "Oh yeah, I want my ego to be killed so that I can survive." It's a great power this splitting power.

The moment of truth is the willingness to give up all hope, all search for escape, which is knowledge, which is understanding. And to simply be in that which one has fought, futilely fought to avoid. In other words, to experience in this moment non-existence, death, the end. It is not a discussion about surrender, or when, or why you can't, or why it is freewill, or predestination, or God's grace, or my responsibility. It is not that discussion. That discussion is only continuing in the belief that you, as an entity, must at all costs avoid the experience of non-existence, of death. At what a cost, it has been your life that you have paid. Some perks come with that, of course. Great feelings of being in control, great feelings of power, and then you die, over, and over, and over.

So the radicalness of this transmission from Ramana, Papaji, to you, is nothing to hold on to. No hope, no teaching, no body, no heaven, no hell, no reincarnation, nothing. It is a most radical teaching. And it was said in the past that most people were not ready for it. But if you look in your life, you will see you have been through many teachings. You have had many hopes, you have feared hell and you have worked for heaven, and you have believed in reincarnation, and you have dealt with your *karma*, and you have practiced your *dharma*, and you have been bad to prove you are free, you have been good to prove you are good. So you are ready. That is the *Tapas*, that is the purification.

Over and over you have done it right, and you have done it wrong. All trying to avoid this experience that who you are isn't. Well, it's time with this support of your *Sangha*, of your family, of yourself to actually hear what the greatest teachers of all

time have pointed to. And what, in our Western world, we have an example, as in Christ, who died on the cross to prove that he could not die. So, enough of that. What about you? What about now?

GANGAJI: Yes. *Namaste.*

PARTICIPANT: *Well, I feel like I have lost the battle, and the battle is to defeat the cancer. And I am angry and sad.*

GANGAJI: That's good. But keep going, don't stop there. That is great, "I am angry." Yes, anger appears. And when you are willing to be angry, you see sadness is there. Keep going.

PARTICIPANT: *And it is like I have no power and ...*

GANGAJI: No, now we are out of anger and sadness. You were really on to something there.

PARTICIPANT: *With the anger and the sad?*

GANGAJI: Yes. So, this, "I have no power," what is that a statement of, what emotion?

PARTICIPANT: *A feeling of... It's funny, I was starting to say (Laughter) impotent, and out came omnipotent.*

GANGAJI: This is my point. Exactly. This avoidance of the experience of impotence keeps you from recognizing the omnipotence that is everywhere. Omnipresent. Even **in** the horror of this thing called "cancer".

PARTICIPANT: *I mean, I spend every waking moment thinking, "If only I can heal. Why haven't I healed myself?" It keeps getting bigger and bigger. You know, the CAT scans show that and I say, I sort of use that to say, "There is something lacking in me. The proof that I am not who I thought I was."*

GANGAJI: Well, you aren't. So good. I am glad you are discovering, "I am not who I thought I was." Whatever you thought.

PARTICIPANT: *Well, all powerful.*

GANGAJI: Call it God, all powerful one.

PARTICIPANT: *Right.*

GANGAJI: Perfect healer.

PARTICIPANT: *Right, that's it. Perfect healer. That I could heal others.*

GANGAJI: "That I could heal others," yes this is called the arrogance of mind. That I am in control, that "I" am in control. You know, and the New Age of course supports this. "You are God." "That's right, I am God. I can do anything." And there are experiences of **doing** anything, and the power of that. And the flip side is, as you say, the suffering of that, the anger of that, the grief of that. When, "What I want to be done is not done." This is like a four-year-old, isn't it? "I **want** this to be **done**." And the reports keep saying, it is not done. So, what a point, what a junction point in a life. What a reckoning. So, what if the cancer is not cured?

PARTICIPANT: *I die. The body dies.*

GANGAJI: The body dies, that's right. What if the cancer is cured?

PARTICIPANT: *Then I have lots of problems. (Laughter) God, I really want to die!*

(Laughter continues)

GANGAJI: This is great, because this is an example of kind of polarity to what I was saying. Now, "I really want to die," is some excuse, or some escape from actually facing living. So then "death" becomes some idea of something that is separate from life. But you busted yourself, you told the truth. So all of the affirmations, as beautiful and helpful as they may have been, when they are supporting the lie, **are** lies. The truth must be told to be free. And to be free is to be who you are. And to be who you are is the **beginning** of self-discovery. Not who you have been told you are by either your parents, or your church, or the latest philosophy, or escape mechanism.

PARTICIPANT: *And that seemed to be where I have been, you know, my mind has been a lot. Taking in all of this stuff that what others say and then kind of not being allowed, allowing myself to say this kind of like, "This is what I want. This is who I am." But a lot, I don't know if "confusion" is the right word, but really kind of angry.*

GANGAJI: Yes, angry because really these "others" have control of your life.

PARTICIPANT: *Right.*

GANGAJI: They have told you how you should think, what you should say, what should happen to your body, how it should be.

PARTICIPANT: *"Don't get angry."*

GANGAJI: Yeah, "That's bad for you." Yes, but the point is, deeper than that they have said it, is that your **blame** for them controlling your experience was unseen. And that blame for them is simply a, what is called, projection. For **you** trying to do it and "they" are keeping you from doing it.

PARTICIPANT: *It's my own life.*

GANGAJI: Yes, what beautiful, simple words as, "It is my own life." And what a precious life, what a precious moment, this life is. How is it to be spent? What a

precious moment, what a precious weekend, what a precious season, this life. How is it to be spent?

PARTICIPANT: *Loving others, loving myself.*

GANGAJI: It's up to you. It is up to you. There is, in truth, no one else involved in this. There is support from what appears to be others, and that support is received, or rejected, or it is good support, or it is bad support, but in truth, it is up to you fully and completely. And that has nothing to do with curing the cancer. Although, or I hope the cancer is cured, so you can face life.

PARTICIPANT: *That's right. Get back at those problems.*

GANGAJI: Because there is something yet to be seen. Thank you for your honesty.

PARTICIPANT: *Thank you.*

GANGAJI: It is very beautiful. You see in this moment, this is wholeness, this is the healing. Whatever happens to the cancer of the body, this moment of clarity, of response, which is really the ability to respond. Responsibility. What a gift it is and how we have turned that word into some kind of shouldering some burden to do something that somebody told us we should do once. You have infinite capacity to respond. And the willingness to die, to surrender, is what reveals that capacity to live.

BARBARA: I love that we can have a conversation about death that is so alive. When we are willing and curious, we can ask the same question Ramana asked, "Who dies?" To me that is the great good luck. And if you feel like you have benefited from today's podcast the way I have, be sure to share it with others. You can find more episodes of *Being Yourself* on the [Gangaji.org](https://www.gangaji.org) website, that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot o-r-g. You will also find video clips, blogs, Gangaji's events schedule, information about the prison program and scholarships and so much more.

2023 is the thirtieth anniversary of the Gangaji Foundation and always it's my joy to acknowledge all the volunteers, all the donors who have helped send out this message of peace to the world, and of course you know, Gangaji was the first volunteer. And I welcome your participation.

If you would like to volunteer or you would like to make a donation to support this podcast or any other programs of the Gangaji Foundation, you can also do that on the website, [Gangaji.org](https://www.gangaji.org)

And before I go, I must also thank you. Thank you for listening. Thank you for participating, for being here. I wish you the very best holidays and New Year and look forward to sharing more of these podcasts with you in 2024.

My name is Barbara Denempont. Until next time.