

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 67
Host Barbara Denempont
Necessary Pain, Unnecessary Suffering
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GANGAJI: I am not a pain doctor, but I am a suffering doctor. And I know that the medicine for suffering is to turn and go into the pain. As long as there is a resistance and a running in the mind, running from the pain, there is suffering.

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

This month my inspiration for the podcast comes directly from my own life. I had a bit of a health crisis in the last few weeks. And I am fine, I've recovered, but it was definitely a moment of dealing with some significant pain, being hospitalized and one of the things that happened as I left the hospital and came home is, I was saying to Gangaji how grateful I was for all the wonderful care that I received and all the support that I received and, at the end of that exchange, I said, "And, you know, I'm grateful for the pain." It was a lot of pain – let's just say that. It was a lot of pain. But I was grateful for the pain and she wrote back and said, "Yes, holy attention getter."

So there is this essential role that we know pain plays in our lives but so much of our lives can be spent trying to avoid pain or get rid of pain. Now, I understand with physical pain. You know, you take medication, you know, you try to heal things, you fix things. But there still is a difference between meeting that physical pain and suffering that physical pain. And that's what I wanted to get to this month. So, I have found a wonderful exchange that dives directly into what it is to meet physical pain.

(Excerpted from: Open Meeting in Rohnert Park, CA, April 4, 2001)

GANGAJI: Hi.

PARTICIPANT: *Um, I have never seen you before, but I have heard a tape, and you seem like a wise person, and so I thought I would ask you something.*

GANGAJI: Okay. (Laughter) Yes.

PARTICIPANT: *Okay, alright, I am not afraid to make a fool of myself.*

GANGAJI: Oh, good.

PARTICIPANT: *I was wondering what you do with... Okay, I have a physical pain condition.*

GANGAJI: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: *And I have done a lot of physical, a lot of spiritual work. But I cannot seem to get around it.*

GANGAJI: What is the pain situation?

PARTICIPANT: (Sobbing) *Well, I just have a lot of pain, and it is just seems to be what I have come into this life with, you know. And I know that I am more than the pain, you know.*

GANGAJI: How do you know that?

PARTICIPANT: *I have experienced it.*

GANGAJI: Well, that is beautiful, isn't it? And you do what you can do to take care of the pain?

PARTICIPANT: *Yeah.*

GANGAJI: And it is just like it won't go away? Then the pain has something to teach you. That you have not...

PARTICIPANT: It has already taught me something.

GANGAJI: No, no. Yes, I understand it has already taught you. But there is something waiting inside it. I am not saying the pain will ever go away, I don't that it will go away. Some bodies have pain throughout their lives, but I know that the suffering around the pain is some resistance to what the pain is offering. And not even that it came to offer that, I am not speaking in a metaphysical way. It is just, I am speaking about the possibility of actually meeting the pain. Not going around it. Going **right** into it.

PARTICIPANT: *Yeah, yeah, I have done that sometimes.*

GANGAJI: And what happens?

PARTICIPANT: It can momentarily bring peace, yeah.

GANGAJI: It brings the peace?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, but it doesn't go away.

GANGAJI: What brings the peace? Yes, but there is peace. So in momentarily, in moments that you have experienced, if I am understanding you correctly, when you stop resisting the pain, you actually go into the pain, there is peace.

PARTICIPANT: There has been, yeah.

GANGAJI: There has been peace, right?

PARTICIPANT: *Yeah.*

GANGAJI: So the pain doesn't have to go away for there to be the recognition of peace. Is that right? I don't want to feed you your lines.

PARTICIPANT: *Say it again.*

GANGAJI: So the pain doesn't have to go away for there to be a recognition of peace.

PARTICIPANT: *Yeah, that is true.*

GANGAJI: So then the question is, what do you want most? And in this case, not in all cases, but in this case, let us say that, do you want **most** for the pain to go away, or **most** for there to be peace? That is a hard question, I can appreciate it.

PARTICIPANT: *Yeah.*

GANGAJI: So, before you answer, if the pain goes away, what is it you will get?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know.

GANGAJI: Well, you must have some idea, "If I am rid of this pain, then I will have...."

PARTICIPANT: *I can't say peace, because I don't know that.*

GANGAJI: But isn't that what you hope?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, but it seems like when you get something that you hope you, or you think you want that will make everything right, then as soon as you get it, then there is something else to fill its place.

GANGAJI: That's right. That is wisdom of maturity. But if you will examine that your hopes and your energy of getting rid of this pain, has to do with wanting peace to be where it is. You want the pain out, and peace there. But you have just told me that in moments in the past, where for some reason through grace, or exhaustion, or whatever, you stopped fighting the pain, you stopped trying to get rid of the pain so that you can get whatever will be there when the pain is not there. You just go into the pain, there is peace.

PARTICIPANT: The problem is I live in a physical body, you know, I can't always...

GANGAJI: I am speaking of the physical body.

PARTICIPANT: Go into the pain, it is like...

GANGAJI: How long does it take? Are you aware of the pain right now?

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: Let's go in it together then.

PARTICIPANT: *Okay.*

GANGAJI: Where is it?

PARTICIPANT: Ah, various parts, shoulders, neck, head, knees.

GANGAJI: Pick one of those spots, but not to get rid of it! This is not an exercise in getting rid of it. There are plenty of exercises to get rid of it, and some work, and they can be learned, and they are useful, and I have nothing against them, but that is not what this is. This is an exercise in **not** getting rid of it.

PARTICIPANT: *Okay.*

GANGAJI: Okay? This is an exercise in going into the very core of it.

PARTICIPANT: *Okay.*

GANGAJI: Are you there?

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: How long did it take?

PARTICIPANT: *Not long.*

GANGAJI: Less than a second. What is there? What is in the core?

PARTICIPANT: *Fear.*

GANGAJI: Fear. So now we have a deeper core, let us go into that fear. Not to get rid of it, this is an exercise in **not** getting rid of the fear.

PARTICIPANT: *Okay.*

GANGAJI: Just going **right** into it. What are you experiencing?

PARTICIPANT: *Peace.*

GANGAJI: How long did that take?

PARTICIPANT: *Not long.*

GANGAJI: Not long. So let's go into the peace, not to keep it, not to keep it. This is an exercise to see if you can get rid of it by going into it.

PARTICIPANT: I don't want to get rid of it.

GANGAJI: Yes, I understand. Just like you didn't want to go into the fear or into the pain, so this is like counter-intuitive. It is counter what we have learned as organisms, usefully learned, to avoid pain, to avoid fear, to listen to fear. Because that has been part of the survival mechanism, but in our meeting tonight, we are more concerned with what is eternally true than we are with particular survival. So when you go into this peace, not to keep it, just to meet it. What is your experience?

PARTICIPANT: I went into my head.

GANGAJI: But you know the difference, don't you?

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: That is excellent, that is all that is required. That is called "discriminating wisdom", that means you can tell the truth, and you just told the truth. So you attended to your thoughts, but did the peace go anywhere when you attended to your thoughts? Now you can check that out. Because really, the whole point of this is, does the **peace** come and go when thoughts come and go? I have recognized that experience of the peace may come and go. But I am speaking of does peace, itself, come and go. Experiences by their nature come and go.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, I see that distinction.

GANGAJI: I am not a pain doctor, but I am a suffering doctor. And I know that the medicine for suffering is to turn and go into the pain. As long as there is a resistance and a running in the mind, running from the pain, there is suffering. And this suffering has a past, and it has a projected future. But in the willingness to stop and inquire, either who is suffering? Or, what is in this pain? The mind loses past and future. And what is real and true is revealed. So we have the experience of many different kinds of bodies, and some bodies are extraordinarily healthy and have very little pain. And some bodies are extraordinarily sensitive and have quite a bit of pain, physical pain, emotional pain, circumstantial pain. And this is across the board, rich, poor, all races, all tribes, all nations. That is just the variety of life. The activity of mind in either trying to keep a particular type body, or get a particular type body, is suffering. In **this** body that you have thought you are, in the core of this body, whatever type of body it is, the sensitive painful body, or healthy painless body. Doesn't matter. In the core, there is the space that is peace. And if you stop thinking about how to get out of the body that may be painful, or how to keep the body that is pain free, you get to experience the truth. So that is self-inquiry using pain.

PARTICIPANT: *Thank you.*

GANGAJI: I thank you.

PARTICIPANT: *Got a little bit of peace here yourself. Just sitting here, yeah, I see what that guy meant.*

GANGAJI: Yes, well sit a little longer. Look out at them so they can see what I see in your eyes. Show them your, what I am seeing so...keep looking...

PARTICIPANT: *This is intense.*

GANGAJI: Yes, you just stay with it, it gets intense sometimes. It gets painful sometimes, then it gets even more intense, just stay with it. You are listening to what is deeper, or you **can** listen to what is deeper. You have the invitation to listen deeper, to hear deeper, regardless of what is happening physically, mentally, emotionally, circumstantially. This is your birthright. This has always been with you, this capacity. But in our culture, it is not fostered, nevertheless it is still here. What are you experiencing now?

PARTICIPANT: A little embarrassment, but pretty peaceful.

GANGAJI: So let yourself be even more embarrassed and see if the peace gets smaller or bigger.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT: *Phew.*

GANGAJI: You make an offering of yourself up here. That is why I keep directing you to see what is receiving your offering, so that you can receive that. Then we will have met one another.

PARTICIPANT: *I feel met.*

GANGAJI: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: *Thank you.*

GANGAJI: Once you really recognize you are met, then you can meet whatever appears. This I promise. This is the issue. Are you willing to see deeper right now? And I don't mean see like imagery. Are you willing to BE deeper? There is no end to the depth. There is a beginning and an end to every **thing**, but the depth of your Being is no **thing**. It is the presence of God. It is endless. It is your own Self.

BARBARA: Well, that particular piece is leaving me speechless. I really have no words to reflect on what was just happening inside that exchange but it is what is possible for all of us and I am so happy to share it with you.

And I want to remind you before we go that the Gangaji website, gangaji.org, that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot o-r-g is available to you and has so many wonderful resources, podcasts, videos. Gangaji's events are all listed there as well as her monthly online gatherings. So I invite you to take advantage, full advantage of the resources that

are there for your spiritual inquiry. And I thank all of the volunteers and the donors and the staff and Gangaji for making that all possible.

Thank you for listening. My name is Barbara Denempont. Until next time.