

Gangaji Podcast  
Being Yourself  
Episode 70  
Host Barbara Denempont  
The Innocence That Was Never Lost  
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GANGAJI: I am not interested in you having a better story of who you are, a place to escape to when things are rough or unhappy, or boring. My interest in our meeting is that you will meet the truth of who you are.

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

I've got some really great news to share with you about the Gangaji Foundation Prison Program and I am going to do that at the end of this podcast.

But right now, I want to bring you this really potent monologue on innocence, or should I say, the loss of innocence. I am confident that if you are listening to this podcast, you have experienced this kind of loss or disillusionment, whether it was the disillusionment of yourself or life or family or somebody else, it is a painful loss. And if we're lucky, we recognize the choice that that loss gives us: do we fall into cynicism, nihilism, self-betrayal, or do we simply face it and meet it? Because in that is this possibility to discover the innocence you never lost.

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(Excerpted from: A Meeting with Gangaji, Marin County, CA, July 22, 2000)

GANGAJI: Last night a young woman asked a question about innocence. And it is such an important question, because at a certain point in most lives there is a recognition that innocence has been lost, or a perception that innocence has been lost. And the, what was, where innocence was, is now kind of cynicism, or pollution, or sense of hopelessness, or jaded outlook either spiritually or worldly. And there is a remembrance of something that was pure, and fresh, and clean. And in remembering that, there is then the desire to somehow reclaim that, or get back to that. This is quite natural, because there is still the echo of the taste of that freshness. The only problem that I see in that, well the problem is two-fold, and that there is some firm belief that since the innocence is not being experienced now, the innocence is no longer here, it is somewhere else. And the other part of that is that usually where it is remembered is where it is assumed to be. So if you remember your childhood, as this young woman was speaking as a kind of innocence, then there is a hope or an attempt to somehow get back to that childhood. But that is impossible. That is gone. That is over. That childhood is over. In recognizing that, then of course there is the fear, "Well that must mean the innocence is over", since the innocence and the childhood were so linked. Or if you remember maybe adolescence, or just before adolescence, when there is this burst of energy, and

power, and strength, and willingness to take the world as it is and live life. And this attempt to get back to that, well we see that all of the time.

There is a movie, a ruthless movie, American Beauty, that really shows that quite well. A man who had basically sold out, was leading a dead life, knew he was living a dead life. And then somehow had an opportunity to change it, and changed it, but his change was to then bring back his adolescent desires, his adolescent car, and the shallowness of that time, the superficiality of that. So recycling his life back to get pleasure and power, and sacrificing the potential for some depth in his life. Luckily what redeemed him in the movie was in the very moment of choice of violating innocence, he actually could not violate innocence in the form of a young girl. Made it a really good movie. Otherwise, it would just be the same old story.

So the problem is really centered in somehow not trusting, or not knowing, or not experiencing that the innocence, the purity that is sought is already here at the core, at the bottom, of all the experiences that have been layered on top of it. So there have been violations, there have been betrayals, there has been suffering, there has been misery, there have been sell-outs, and everyone is both the victim of that and the perpetrator of that. And it is very good to see the being victimized and the victimizing, but at the bottom of it **all** this innocence still is.

If you will give up your activity which is mental, it may have by-products that are physical, or circumstantial, or emotional, but it is mental activity to return to sometime in your life when you knew yourself to be innocent, and pure, powerful, and free, and good, and holy, and one with God. If you will give up the image of that, if you will give up the attempt to get that back, if you will actually burn in the huge fire of disillusionment, that is the experience of the loss of that, rather than trying to get it back. And most spirituality is really about trying to get it back, and if you put your mind into a trance by some of the most beautiful methods, it can work for a moment or two, or an hour, or a period of a retreat, with a mantra or a meditation practice, or a process. But until the willingness, or this is my experience anyway, until the willingness to simply burn up in facing the self-betrayal, the self-violation, the self-hatred, the self-theory, in facing that without moving to fix it, or make it nice, or make it comfortable, or make it better, or make it spiritual, just to burn up in it. To not move into denying it as if it is not there, because all is one, and all is God, and all is perfect. Just to give up those amulet statements and burn in it, grieve in it. There is the possibility of recognizing in the core, at the bottom, the purity is still pure. There has been no violation there, no experience to you or from you can violate that. Then you know directly without **doing** anything who you are. And since you don't **do** anything to realize who you are, it is causeless. Who you are and the recognition of who are, are both causeless. When we assign a cause to who we are, then we have a definition of who we are. And that definition is a story, and it has an image, and it has an emotion, it has circumstances, and it is subject to change. It is subject to birth, it is subject to death, it is subject to betrayal, it is subject to thievery, it is subject to rape, it is subject to hatred.

So that it is very clear what is going on **here**, is that I am not interested **at all** in your having a better definition of who you are. I am not interested in your having a better story of who you are, a place to escape to when things are rough, or unhappy, or boring. My interest in our meeting is that you will meet the truth of who you are, and

you will discover there is no escape from that. And in that surrender to what there is no escape from, you will meet the deeper, bigger truth of who you are. And the still bigger, deeper Truth. There is a point in this meeting where there is a critical shift, where you do not relate to life as a series of definitions subject to change. You recognize the definitions, but you recognize that they are imposed onto life. That life is free of definition. Life Itself, the energy that infuses every lifeform, Life Itself, is free of definition. You are free of definition. You **have** defined yourself as somebody, good, or bad, or enlightened, or unenlightened, or got it, or you did not get it, or you kept it, or you lost it, all of this is absurd, just definitions. The fear is to not define yourself at all, because as this young woman spoke last night, she related that when she got close to not defining herself at all, she saw maybe she would not exist then. That is the fear. It is a strong, deep fear, it is what all of the conditioning is attached to. And it is true, if you stop defining yourself **you** do not exist as any definition. You **do** exist, but not as any definition. You exist as who You are, indefinable, unconceivable, and undeniable.

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BARBARA: I put this particular monologue in the category of “not for the faint of heart”. This is a really rich and potent conversation and inquiry. I hope it has been of support to you.

Now I want to tell you this really good news. The Gangaji Foundation Prison Program has been operating since 1994 and now in 2024, there’s this whole new innovation. We’ve had course by mail happening called Freedom Inside and we have about seven hundred and twenty members enrolled in the course. Now there is this new educational platform for those who are incarcerated called Edovo and we have been able to take Gangaji’s course materials and put it onto this digital platform. In the very first few weeks there were over seventeen hundred prisoners who signed on. So that is just thrilling to us and for those of you living on the outside, I really want to ask you to support this program with your donations. You can make a donation at [gangaji.org](http://gangaji.org), that’s g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot o-r-g.

And if you are on the inside and listening to this, please know that this program is here for you. You can reach out to us at Gangaji Foundation Prison Program, P.O. Box 716, Ashland OR 97520.

I am just full of gratitude. Thank you for listening. Until next time.