

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 72
Host Barbara Denempont
Stopping Doing, Simply Being
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GANGAJI: And what gets overlooked is what is absolutely present in the oceanic realization and absolutely present in the experience of contraction and the loss of the state of oceanic realization.

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

I'm going to take a deep dip into the archives back to a meeting that was held in New York City just three years after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. For me this is a rich monologue, first because of the context it is shared in, but mostly because Gangaji is speaking about the essential mistake we make on the spiritual path, the real mechanics of how we overlook the truth of ourselves.

And the question she brings to us, or the invitation she brings, is: What is discovered when we choose to simply be instead of chasing what we think we need to become.

(Excerpted from: A Meeting with Gangaji, New York Public Meeting, New York, NY, September 11, 2004.)

GANGAJI: Hello everyone, thank you for being here today. This day of importance in this city, in the nation, in the world, a day of remembering terror and grief, fear and anger and **here** discovering peace. Not separate from the terror, or grief, or anger or fear, not peace that's someplace else, or was even someplace else that day. The peace that is always here.

The other night when we met, I was speaking of the essential discovery of what is always **here**. Of what here is. What the very word "here" means. Because wherever you are, that's here. And in our spiritual ambitions we really usually overlook this essential truth that there is that which does not change regardless of what else appears here. And until that's discovered, the unchangeable-ness, the very nature of here-ness, and that that is yourself, until that is discovered, there is suffering, unnecessary suffering. Not to say that suffering may not appear here, but if it goes unrecognized that there is that which includes suffering and remains when suffering passes, then there is a lack of self-realization, a lack of recognition of an essential truth. Maybe not even the final truth. But without this recognition no further recognition can really occur. No matter how much practice you do, how much yoga you do, how much understanding you have.

So my purpose in your life is to point out this very **simple** absolute truth: You are always here. Wherever you think you are, whatever you think about where you are, wherever you think you should be, whether you are daydreaming about the past or the future, it is all occurring here. In an instant there can just be a recognition of that, and in that recognition, there arises naturally a choice to discover what does it mean to just be here. What does it actually mean to not try to get anything to add to here, or to subtract from here, just to be here as it is. That's a moment of the most profound total relaxation. An opening, and in that opening there is the possibility of inquiring, what then is here, who is here, who am I? In that moment the mind stops searching for some fulfillment of definition and just returns in the resolution of oneself.

So I know that most of you have some understanding of these matters, and probably are searching for more understanding in the belief or the hope that **understanding** will reveal to you whatever it is you think you need to have revealed to be happy, to be self-realized. And many of you have practices whereby your physical being is involved in something daily, and some of you have the experience of devotion, perhaps an emotional state of awe and love. And all of those are wonderful, wondrous, and each can be completely supportive of my deeply discovering what is here, but none of them can **bring** you here. Because you are already here. And the belief that doing something will get you more here, is the belief that you are something that can be separate from here, or is the belief that what is here is not enough. Meaning who you are is not enough. And that belief goes unquestioned in the search for more understanding, for being a better practitioner, for getting more devotion.

So then, our very practices and our understandings and our blissful states, amazingly become poison. What starts out as this sublime medicine turns into a poison, because it begins to support the lie that you are somehow separate from what it is you are seeking. So it doesn't matter that you understand that all is one, if your experience is that, "I got to get to oneness." Do you hear that? I hear that all the time, "I've got to get to unity. I've got to get to unity. What do I need to do to get there? Well, I need to understand more. I need to practice more. I need to love more. I need to be in Samadhi more, so I need to do what I need to do to get in Samadhi, or understand, or practice." It's a sweet poison, just as it starts out as kind of a hard medicine.

So I want to make something very clear at this moment, I have nothing against understanding. Understanding is sublime and practice, yogic practice of any kind, can be, huh, it's as necessary as a good education. It's a wonderful discipline for the body, so that the energies are channeled appropriately so that they aren't scattered and fragmented. I support your practice for that. And devotion is being in love, I could have nothing against being in love. I recommend it, wholeheartedly. But the moment you try to use being in love, or use the channeling of energies, or use understanding to get **you** into unity, then you are using medicine as poison to show that you are not there. Do you follow this? I really want this to be clear and concrete. And I know I am speaking to spiritual seekers, and maybe accomplished practitioners, and people who have understood a great deal. And I am inviting you, just for the purposes of investigation, to take a chance and in this hour and a half, give up your yoga, just for an hour and a half, give up your understanding, and give

you your devotion. Just let it all go. Just out of curiosity, just out of the possibility to investigate what is here with no need of understanding, with no need of devotion or practice, what is **here**?

You know, we are aware our bodies are present, and when our bodies are sick we say, "My body is sick, or my body is contracted, or my body has a rash, or my body has indigestion, or my body is feeling very good today, or my body got well." We always know "my body" is the constant there. We don't make the mistake of saying, "Oh I am sick therefore I lost my body. Where is my body? Has anybody seen my body, I got to get back to my body." And so that is obvious, right? Unless we are totally gone psychotically. But I would say ninety-nine-point-five percent that doesn't apply. Just totally gone neurotically. Which means something happens where you imagine that consciousness goes away when states of consciousness change. So that if there is a state of consciousness of oceanic realization, it's like, "I am That. I am Unity." And then there is a state of consciousness that follows that of contraction, it's like, "Oh, what happened? I lost my consciousness." And what gets overlooked is what is absolutely present in the oceanic realization and absolutely present in the experience of contraction and the loss of the state of oceanic realization. And this overlooking is some kind of mistake in the mechanism that we can correct. And perhaps the mistake has been supported by our conditioning, certainly it has, but especially by our spiritual conditioning. Because we begin to worship particular states and we despise other states.

Particular states, beautiful states, states of unity and bliss prove that we are not separate from God or unity. And therefore, we make states of negativity or states of contraction prove that we are separate from unity or God. And this is the mistake. This equation is a huge mistake and each one in this room has made it, we have all made that equation.

When I met my teacher I was in despair. I was actually relatively happy, but in despair because I couldn't keep one side of the equation in place. I couldn't always be in the bliss of oceanic consciousness, no matter what I did, I could **have** it, it would appear, but I couldn't keep it. And I was desperate, and I went to my teacher and he saw I was desperate, and he saw that as a good sign. And he also saw that I would perhaps listen to him, because I had prayed for a teacher. And I did listen to him, and he said, "Give up your search!" This was shocking and terrifying. When I realized the impact of what he was saying, "Give up your search," that meant stop searching for this endless state.

I had all sorts of imaginings of what would surely follow that. I would fall back into some earlier state, like when I was sixteen, or eleven, or nine, where I was just lost in the morass of neurosis, separation. I would lose some of what I had gained in my years of practicing, and understanding, and *Samadhi*. It was really fearsome, but I have never heard it before. And he said it with such strength, and he said it so directly, he said, "Stop. where you are. Whatever you have gained that you didn't have before, lose it. Lose your definition of yourself as someone who has gained something."

So there was a moment of choice there. I could have left, or I could have stayed and pretended to do what he was asking me to do to be a good student, but I recognized,

even if the result were horrible, it was worth investigating. Even if it meant I would experience the hell that I had crawled out of, I had prayed for a teacher and here he was telling me, “Stop, give it up.” And so by that grace there was stopping.

In one instant of stopping searching there is an opening of the mind. It's as if a trap door opens. Not necessarily a blissful expansion, although it can be blissful, can be very simple, very subtle. Just a simple resting of the activity of mind, a simple stopping of the instinct to grab something and keep it, or to avoid something, keep that away, just the stopping. There is a revelation that results from this willingness to give up everything you have acquired. To give up hope of acquiring anything from stopping, there is a revelation of what is here. Which is a revelation of who you are. And it is both familiar, very familiar, and absolutely fresh. It's at that point that your real spiritual investigation begins. It's at that point that in your life there is choice. Before that there is no choice, it's just a mechanism. Mistakes are being repeated mechanically. The mistake of overlooking what is effortlessly, choicelessly, always here, just mechanically continues.

So my teacher asked me to come to you, and to invite you also to this simple yet surprisingly, shockingly radical invitation. Give up your search, even if it's just for this afternoon. Give up your search to understand even what I am saying. Or to practice being the good student and getting what I am saying. Just be here. Just as you are in the core before you learned who you were, and then before you rebelled against who you learned you should be, before you discovered you were a female or a male, before you discovered you were ignorant, or before you discovered you were enlightened, before all that. Before you discovered you knew something, or you had to know something. That's still here, that before-ness. That hasn't gone anywhere. That is the space of here itself. Then here we can meet as these forms that appear here. With whatever conversation that appears here, with whatever emotion appears here, with whatever understanding appears. But here is primary and the rest follow. Interesting what follows, interesting what appears, interesting what disappears, but what doesn't appear, doesn't disappear, doesn't lead and doesn't follow, this is the crux of the invitation, this is what is always present, this is yourself.

BARBARA: You know, I truly hope that these podcasts are as beneficial to you as they are to me. I really appreciate having the opportunity to find these recordings for you.

And I also want to mention before I go that Gangaji is going to be holding an online public meeting on August 3rd, that's Saturday. It's going to start at 11 a.m. Pacific Time. We just added it to the calendar. You can find out more about it at gangaji.org, that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot o-r-g.

It is offered free of charge as well as if you would like to make a donation to the Gangaji Foundation that is also welcome. And while you are at the website you can also check out all the other content and opportunities there are to connect with Gangaji right there.

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