

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 80
Host Barbara Denempont
The Trance of Enlightenment
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GANGAJI: Papaji once said, “It takes one, one second, one part of a second to realize your true identity and it is endless.”

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

For millennia humans have been seeking enlightenment from all parts of the world and all different eras. And that word enlightenment can actually mean different things for different people. But for our conversation today, I am really speaking about the particular spiritual attainment or status that offer some form of transcendence, and there are many requirements and there are many levels, and there is also, a really big trap. And that is what this monologue is about. This is what Gangaji is sharing, – how you can fall into very deep trap when you are seeking enlightenment.

(Excerpted from: A Meeting with Gangaji, Retreat, Silver Bay, NY, September 26, 2003)

Good morning, everyone. I got a very sweet letter yesterday’s batch of mail. And really with the best intentions, this letter was asking the question based on an experience she had with another teacher where there was a huge opening, deep opening, true opening. And then further experiences with me and just in life, where there is really opening and feeling calm, feeling happier. And her question was, is she enlightened? She wanted to know, “Am I enlightened?” It is funny. It is the sweetest question, you know, so I hope who ever wrote it is also laughing a little bit.

You know, we could get into a discussion of what enlightenment is, and what are the qualities of enlightenment, and the marks of enlightenment, the signs of enlightenment. But the gift of Ramana, this huge gift of Ramana, this radical cutting at the root gift of Ramana, it was passed on through Papaji, and here as in your heart. Is really turning that question back, who is it who is enlightened or unenlightened? And if that question is truly asked, then the presence of who you are is so far beyond any question of enlightenment or un-enlightenment. And then you are enlightened. But it is not the “I” who asked the question, you see, that is still a thought, “Am I enlightened?” Is still following the thought, “Oh I am, because I felt

oceanic just a minute ago.” Or, “I am not, because I feel contracted right now. Oh I am, because I haven’t had any bad thoughts in three weeks. Oh, I am not, because I am having a negative thought.” This is still referencing who you are to a thought, or a feeling, or a circumstance. And who you are is closer than any of that. And true inquiry, which we have been playing with here this time together, true inquiry is really examining all of those places where you have assigned your identity. And one of the places, one of the spiritual identities is the identity of the one who is enlightened now, finally. “So that then I can get on with my life. And then people will be nice to me,” or “Then I will get some respect.”

So if that question arises, “Am I enlightened?” You just take a moment to be fully and absolutely and completely unenlightened. Because that is what that question is based on. Unenlightened, just be unenlightened. With no reaching or searching for enlightenment, just a moment. You can go right back to the search. But just take one free moment, and tell the truth of what is experienced in that. And then if the search is pursued, it is fine, then it is really a yogic search. You are searching to purify or modify or perfect a character, or the body, or the emotions, or the mind. That’s fine. That is a yogic practice, different, I mean, it is not always called yoga, but it is a yogic practice. But at least in that moment, the practice won’t be about getting someplace. There will already have been a recognition of what is here. When you are fully, fully not what it is you think you have to be, if you complete your practice. You are fully, if you fully directly experience the worst that you imagine, then not only are you not enlightened, but you will never be enlightened. Enlightenment is impossible for you throughout all time, **and** you are the one it is impossible for. (Laughter) Yes, you knew it all along. So that you really, directly experience that. Then the joke is self-evident. It is really self-evident. You get the joke. You are the butt of the joke. You are God making jokes at itself.

It is such a trap. And the word itself is a trance word. You hear the word “enlightenment” and you go into a trance, based on what you have read, based on what you have been taught, based on what you have experienced, based on what you think anyone is saying at any time, based on what editors and translators have passed down to you throughout time, the great sages. It’s like, um, you go into the enlightenment trance. And you go, “I am enlightened, and can enlighten you if you do everything I say.” (Laughter) “And you are bad, because you are not doing it.” I have seen this with teachers. You know, you can feel this with the teacher with their students. Because they won’t get what the teacher wants them to get. Same with a parent getting furious with a child, or a child getting furious with a parent.

So it is just is a transference of the same old conditioning, so if we just forget that word, and we forget the word God, and we forget the word truth, and we forget the word love, and we forget the word freedom, and we forget the word that you go by as your name. And you forget the word that identifies your body as a particular gender. And you, it is self-evident what is closer than any word. Self-evident what is here. What is always here. Then you use any word you like and it is informed by that evidence. You use the word “I” and you are referring to your body, and it is informed by that evidence, so you use the word “I” and it’s speaking of the totality of all being and it is informed by that evidence of direct experience. Papaji once said, “It takes one, one second, one part of a second to realize your true identity and it is endless.” But in that one second, there is a shift, there is an

essential experience. It is my assumption that everyone in this room has had that essential experience, whether it is in memory or not. Whether it was this week, before this week, as a child, in a dream, that essential experience has already occurred. So that words such as truth, and limitless, and beloved, are no longer abstract words. They have a resonance with at least a second of direct experience. That our time together, your time in your life, every moment of your life, is an opportunity, not to recapture that experience, but to discover what was revealed in that experience now. As it is here now. Good nature, bad nature, happy nature, sad happy, finally essential nature. So in that, for that, from that, to that, I offer my full and complete support, and I offer my teacher's as he instructed me to offer to you. And his teacher, who he introduced me to. And his teacher, who I had the great good fortune to walk around. And I take the presumption to offer also all teachers of all lineages, throughout all time, to support your full and complete recognition of that. So that the question never arises, so that that is no longer the question. So the question shifts from, "Am I enlightened?" to "What is this, really?" Or as someone said, "How can I serve, really? How can I express gratitude? How can I speak truth?" And that that too reflects you deeper into experiencing directly what it is you fear you won't do, you can't do, you haven't done. So that you can discover the insubstantiality of any perceived blockage, however strong that perception is, however seemingly ingrained to that perception is, you can perceive its insubstantiality. And in that, the solidity of the truth of who you are, meeting itself everywhere. In every thought, in every emotion, in every circumstance, and every body, inseparable from anything and free of it all.

May all beings find peace. All beings in past, present, future, find peace and happiness. *Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.*

BARBARA: I can honestly say that I do not get jaded listening to these pieces from the archives. I found this piece so moving. And that might be because it was actually the very last meeting of a retreat in Silver Bay back in 2003 after people had gathered for a week. It's very potent to listen to. And I do want to make sure you know that Gangaji is having a retreat here in 2025, here in Ashland, May 22nd to 26th. It is a beautiful opportunity and if you have a financial consideration, you can apply for a scholarship. The deadline is March 24th that's coming up but I know there is still time and that the Donor Community would love to support you in receiving this scholarship.

Now if you can't come, I want to remind you of all the resources that are available to you on the Gangaji website, gangaji.org, that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot o-r-g. Please use them to their deepest possible purpose in supporting you.

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