

Gangaji Podcast  
Being Yourself  
Episode 85  
Host Barbara Denempont  
Overlooking Spaciousness  
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GANGAJI: Can you let go of what you're trying to get and can you meet what you're trying to get rid of? And really, really what all that requires is your willingness to not do anything. And that's huge.

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

Sometimes our most essential realizations come from just living our lives day to day. And I think that's why I want to bring you this particular recording because it actually takes place during a retreat. And it's a moment that, even in your own life, that you can take a moment to retreat from the mental habit or mental activity of survival—all the thoughts, all the thinking and strategizing that goes into surviving, and to just leave it behind for just a moment, to retreat from it for just a moment, to perhaps discover the profound spaciousness that is present, that is always present, that is here and that is in fact who you are. And this is such an essential realization, especially, I would say, in times of uncertainty and when our faith is shaken.

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(Excerpted from: Weekend with Gangaji, Ashland, OR, October 18, 2008)

GANGAJI: I never know what will happen in a retreat. I'm always surprised, and it has always been fresh for me and new because there is a synergy that happens with all of us in our particular life forms, our particular experiences, and most importantly, our particular desire to be free, to know the truth that goes into this sort of cauldron of intention. That can be the power to support one another, and the power to support all beings everywhere, in all realms past, present, and future. So I'm honored that you're here in these times of agitation and uncertainty, or rather during these times where agitation and uncertainty are actually revealed, where illusion of certainty is melted, so that you can discover, absolutely, doubtlessly, the truth of who you are. What has always been here, is always here, and has no notion of not being here.

In this retreat, life is the teacher, not our agenda of life, or our plans for life, or our hopes or fears. Life, itself, in its nakedness, as it is revealed in the particular forms, each of us, life forms, surrendering to life, itself as the teacher. I play the role of

teacher, and I take that very seriously but not heavily. We're all here as students of this living conscious life, aware of itself in each of us with the capacity to be aware of itself as all of us. Any questions, especially if this is your first time here?

PARTICIPANT: It's good to be close and thank you for teaching.

GANGAJI: Good to be close—that's true

PARTICIPANT: She has beautiful faith. I'm not such a faithful sort. I would like to ask you a question about freedom from thought.

GANGAJI: But could I ask you a question first? What do you mean by faith? Because that's one of these words, you know, that we hear and can have many different meanings.

PARTICIPANT: A knowing...a knowing that is with you and doesn't leave you.

GANGAJI: Yes. So, not a hope which faith sometimes gets used as, but this true knowing that whatever I'm experiencing I know, not an intellectual knowing, but what is called Yana: a true, deep knowing. Yes, that's right. And you don't have that? Sorry to just take over your questions, but... (Laughter)

PARTICIPANT: I have it deeply, but it gets so distracted or covered over...

GANGAJI: The mind gets distracted, yeah, yeah, but that's very important that you tell the truth that you have it deeply because truly, deeply, it is who you are. This knowing is one and the same with who you are. And the mind gets distracted—it's true. And one of the reasons we're here this weekend is to pull that distraction away, or to push that distraction away and to come into what is deeply true.

PARTICIPANT: I'm not sure if I've experienced that state of the thought-free state. I'm not sure...

GANGAJI: It's not required. (Laughter) No particular state is required. It's free.

PARTICIPANT: Because even if you know thoughts come and we don't reach out and grab them and package them in ribbons and just run off with them, the mind is always registering sights and sounds and feel, and it's doing something with that, it's always...

GANGAJI: You mean it's perceiving light and rods and cones and shadows...

PARTICIPANT: And red, it says red...

GANGAJI: It says that, but that saying is different from the receiving it. The saying what it is comes after the receiving it. It sometimes seems very quickly, very quick, but it's what we do with the perception, that you say the mind is busy with. I just want to be very clear because that's a very important point.

PARTICIPANT: So together with that...

GANGAJI: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: Can I say the words: What does one do?

GANGAJI: You can say it. Yes. Well, what does one do to avoid getting under it? This one?

PARTICIPANT: Keeps labeling.

GANGAJI: Keeps labeling, that's right. So that's some work that's not necessary. You know when you see red, you don't have to say red. In fact, you might disagree with someone else who says something is red, because there are many gradations of what we call red. You could say it's not red—it's orange. Or it's pink. You could go to war even. Probably it has happened...when colors were being worshipped. So the labeling is useful but just at the very top of the skim. So if you stop labeling in this moment, stop labeling me, stop labeling yourself, stop labeling your states, it's actually easy, isn't it?

PARTICIPANT: And that's what brings a wholeness inside ...when you can do that.

GANGAJI: Beautiful and you, in this moment were you able to?

PARTICIPANT: On some level. (Laughter) I don't know....I was so busy, so busy.

GANGAJI: But in that moment, it was just simple. And this actually happens a lot in your day quite often.

PARTICIPANT: I notice it but...

GANGAJI: So then there's the state of labeling and there's a state of not labeling, and these are states that change back and forth... If you try to cling to not labeling, it doesn't work either. So if you just recognize that this particular definition of states, labeling, not labeling, comes and goes. When you're sleeping, you're not labeling anything. In a moment of just looking out at the creek you're not saying oh, creek, water, water is H<sub>2</sub>O. Oh, rocks, water going over rocks. You're not saying anything really. You may say, *Oh, how beautiful*, but that's not a label really. You're just experiencing. You're receiving. You may have a comment about that but you are not labeling, you're not putting it in its box. So, it happens all the time, and then it changes. You may start to label it because you're scientifically interested in certain labels. What's under that? What's the power to label and stop labeling?

PARTICIPANT: The seeing and the experiencing?

GANGAJI: Yes, that's good. So that's true, but if you don't even call it seeing and experiencing... It's true, those are accurate and legitimate words. If you don't call it anything in this moment, you just are it. What? What's the experience? What's the byproduct of that just being the seeing?

PARTICIPANT: Peacefulness.

GANGAJI: Yeah. So even this peacefulness can come and go, as you know.

PARTICIPANT: Even the overlay of the nervousness.

GANGAJI: Yeah, it comes and goes, and under that as you can always discover what's under, what comes and goes. What's under relative peace? The peace that wasn't here when you were worried about able to do it or not? What's under relativity? As much as relativity forms our whole world experience, what's under that? What's closer than that? You can't give me an answer. There's no answer for that, but you can be that. You are that already. And if you're willing to just stop all of your business of trying to keep one particular state that feels really good and gives you relative peace. And trying to keep away another state that feels bad and gives you relative war, then there's a recognition of what flows and what's still by its nature

PARTICIPANT: And that is the practice and it just deepens? Or no? That is the being and that deepens?

GANGAJI: What happens, no it's good, it's totally legitimate what you're saying, of course, because that can sound like a practice, but if it becomes a practice, it's still an attempt to get something. You're still working to do something, right? That's right, that's right...so maybe then we say the practice is the vigilance of recognizing *Ah! I'm trying to grasp and hold and keep that. Ah! That's it. That's what I want.* And then, *ah*. Can you let go of what you're trying to get and can you meet what you're trying to get rid of? And really, really what all that requires is your willingness to not do anything. And that's huge, because we are wired to do something for survival. So it's huge. And it's absolutely possible. It happens many times in a day by itself. But because we are conditioned to doing, we just ignore those moments and loop from doing moment to doing moment to doing moment and sum them up and call it this is my life, or this was my day, totally overlooking spaciousness that has no problem with doing, it has no problem with not doing, but somehow in moment of not doing can be recognized as spaciousness. It's not that the not doing gives you the spaciousness. Just in that moment there's a recognition of, *Oh that. Oh, that, of course, that's always been here.* And at that point then there's a choice to actually take refuge in what you know in the root of the root of the root. You called it faith and I accept your definition of faith in this and to have faith in that, to surrender to that and then see what happens. What deepens is the mind's surrender. Because the mind's whole job has been never surrender. You know, whatever is happening, do not surrender. Find a different strategy: hide, attack, seduce, run, know. And so it's just a willingness to not do any of that. It's huge and simple. That's alive in your heart. It's what brought you here this weekend. It's already been recognized and then the mind puts up a fight. Papaji used to say as someone is awakening, all the gods and demons of the past come to reclaim them. But I amended that recently. It's allowed. (Laughter) As you will amend my words, which is great. As you begin to awaken all the gods and demons will come to attack you, and invite them to Satsang. Invite them to this spaciousness. It's all they want too. They just have an idea of how to get it. Oh, look at you.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you. Thank you.

GANGAJI: I'm so happy you're here.

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BARBARA:

And I am happy that you are here as I know Gangaji is as well. Because, just as in any retreat or gathering, as we listen here together, we are in support of each other's recognition of peace. And I want to remind you that there are more resources available to you on the Gangaji website, blogs, podcasts, and videos. And you can also join the With Gangaji and gather with people from more than forty countries to really dive into your really earnest spiritual questions. It's a beautiful group and we meet with Gangaji once a month and on the forum and then the rich resource of materials in Gangaji Media Library. We just added Episode Four to the Media Library. This is the Six-part series about Gangaji's life. And this episode dives into Gangaji's first meeting with Papaji. You can find all of that at [gangaji.org](http://gangaji.org), that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot org.

Life is the teacher and our lives are teaching stories. I am very happy to be here with you. Thank you for listening today. My name is Barbara Denempont. Until next time.