

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 89
Host Barbara Denempont
The Trap Door into Consciousness
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GANGAJI: So this judgement, criticism religion has been busted in this moment, for the tyranny that it is. And in this moment, your mind is free of this tyranny that is mind created. It is free to experience the peace of oneself.

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

Today's episode was recorded in 2000 in North Carolina, and it's one of those really great moments where all of our assumptions are challenged and we can feel like we just got flipped on the mat, landed on our backs and are blissfully happy. That's what I love about this, as Gangaji once said, *If you are at the end of your rope, throw the rope away.*

(Excerpted from: A Meeting with Gangaji, Ashville Retreat, Black Mountain, NC May 24, PM 2000)

GANGAJI: Good afternoon. As I read these letters see if it is any different from your mind. And deeper, closer than that, see if it is any different from your own self. Just see.

(Gangaji reads.) *Beloved Gangaji, This is my frantic hand waving from the back row, "Me, me, see me". Help me Gangaji, please. I am struggling and then letting go, falling deeply into my patterns and then climbing out. I am confused, frustrated, not knowing what to do, feeling ashamed that I am failing. I am scared, just plain scared. The same old story. Hey, that is my story. Ok, I am finally starting to get the story thing.*

(Audience laughter) *Thank you Gangaji, for the grace that you are and for sharing yourself with us year after year. I have to keep hearing you over and over, before I get it. Okay, there is another story. The "It takes a long time" story. Am I trying too hard, or not enough? I have been trying to drop judgement and criticism for five years. I see it, and let it go, but it comes right back.*

Where are you Mary? Will you come up?

PARTICIPANT: Hi.

GANGAJI: Hi. So, are you willing to drop your attempts to drop judgement and criticism?

PARTICIPANT: It does not seem like it.

GANGAJI: But this is not what you said. You said, "I have been trying to drop judgement and criticism, and they have stayed."

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: So, I am saying, **drop** trying to drop it.

PARTICIPANT: Drop trying to drop it.

GANGAJI: Right? And then you have succeeded, right away.

PARTICIPANT: Okay.

GANGAJI: That is when criticism is here, right?

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: Good, where are they?

PARTICIPANT: Constantly running around in my head.

GANGAJI: Constantly? Constantly? Just tell the truth, it is very important to tell the truth. God is watching.

(Laughter)

PARTICIPANT: It is here a lot.

GANGAJI: A lot?

PARTICIPANT: A lot

GANGAJI: What percentage of the time?

PARTICIPANT: Fifty.

GANGAJI: Fifty percent of the time. Are you sure? Just check it out.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, I think so.

GANGAJI: So when you are eating, when you are walking, when you are seeing anybody. I don't know how much of the time we are actually sleeping, and...

PARTICIPANT: Oh, yes.

GANGAJI: Yes, we are talking a twenty-four hour day.

PARTICIPANT: Okay.

GANGAJI: So how much percentage of the time in twenty-four hours?

PARTICIPANT: Well, fifty percent of the time I am awake.

GANGAJI: So fifty percent is twelve hours?

PARTICIPANT: Fourteen.

GANGAJI: So seven hours a day. Really? Just tell the truth.

PARTICIPANT: It honestly feels that way, to me.

GANGAJI: I am not talking about feeling now. I am talking about a little closer examination, for seven hours a day you are judging and criticizing?

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: Okay, then obviously there is **something** that judgement and criticism has to do with your life. So what is just underneath the judgement and criticism, because I guarantee you there is nothing inherently wrong in the judgement and criticism. They are just thoughts, conditioned thoughts about how things should be and who is to blame for why they are not as they should be.

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: You or someone else. Right?

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: Past, or future, or present. So what is the **story** of judgement and criticism protecting you from experiencing?

PARTICIPANT: It keeps me from experiencing peace.

GANGAJI: No, before that.

PARTICIPANT: Before that.

GANGAJI: That is the right answer, I do not want the right answer.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, okay.

GANGAJI: Just give me an example of some thought of judgement or criticism that you have.

PARTICIPANT: Oh, I see someone walking by and I will look at them and judge whether their clothes look nice, or their butt is bigger than mine. You know, it is...

GANGAJI: So what is the purpose of that?

PARTICIPANT: It is always like comparing myself.

GANGAJI: So you are comparing.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose.

PARTICIPANT: Right, exactly.

GANGAJI: What is the purpose of the comparison?

PARTICIPANT: It is trying to find my place.

GANGAJI: Right, and so for a moment you find your place and it is high for a moment, and you find your place it is low.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: But then, you have to find it again and again. Seven hours out of fourteen.

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: So, this is not working.

PARTICIPANT: No.

GANGAJI: Good.

PARTICIPANT: That I am clear about.

GANGAJI: But your **idea** now is to get rid of the judgement and the criticism, and then it will work.

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: So then you become critical of your judgement and criticism, and then that gets factored in, and you say, "See that person is not judgmental or critical." Or, "See, I am not as judgmental or critical as that person." So it is the same thing.

PARTICIPANT: Right... Or today, I'm not being judgmental, or today I'm being more critical.

GANGAJI: You get a gold star today, you get a minus mark this other day.

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: Okay, this is the war, that is going on. So, it is fine to be judgmental and critical.

PARTICIPANT: Oh, good.

GANGAJI: It is fine, it is another one of the survival techniques, it is in the genes. In fact, it is the genes, themselves. That is how they get thrown out into space and survive. So then what? If it is really fine to be judgmental. You really have a judgmental thought and it is fine, you do not have a superego that comes in and says, "Bad".

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: Then what?

PARTICIPANT: Then I won't know what to do.

GANGAJI: That is right, "Then I won't know what to do with all of those hours now. At least I know how to fill seven hours of the day. I know how to fill it very well." And that is what happens your whole life, or half of a waking life is filled in an activity that is then suffering on top of that activity. So really, judgement and criticism is an aspect of discernment. Which is an incredible quality of intelligence. But the tightening around it, and then the spiritual overlay, "It should not be there", is now a whip of the superego. Do you follow this?

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: So, what if you open your heart, right now, to being judged, really being judged. And being judged as failing, so that you can experience the ultimate judgement: failed. Don't get to God. Don't get to continue. What is the emotion then?

PARTICIPANT: It is a big tightness in my heart. Lots of fear.

GANGAJI: Lots of fear.

PARTICIPANT: Lots of fear.

GANGAJI: So just drop your consciousness into that fear. Really experience the fear. That is what has been underneath all of the mind activity anyway, but there is something underneath that fear. It may seem limitless until it, itself, is experienced. What are you aware of?

PARTICIPANT: Just calm. It just feels very peaceful.

GANGAJI: Beautiful. So this judgement, criticism religion has been busted in this moment, for the tyranny that it is. And in this moment, your mind is free of this

tyranny that is mind created. It is free to experience the peace of oneself. If in the next moment then, you see someone who looks more peaceful, or you experience the retying of the knot, and you begin to judge that as should not be happening. That, in itself, is an avoidance of the direct experience of the knot itself. Because this comparison thing is strong, but you see how simple. In the moment of, "Okay, comparing", then it leaves the split of the ego, that splits into superego and ego, at least that split is defused. "Okay, I am judging. So what? Judging. So what?" Then there is a possibility just simply, unsentimentally, without the wagging finger, to discover what is the judging really a protection of. To dive deeper into the levels of protecting you from annihilation, from being discarded, from being seen as worthless, no good. From death.

In this sense then, the arising of judgement and critical thinking, is the arising of the dharma bell. It is not to be sent away. It is not to be judged. It is to be, "Oh my God, I am judging. I should not be judging, but I am judging. I am judging. Even if I should not be judging, I am judging. Huh, okay, I am judging. I am judging." There is a space that opens. You could see it on your face, there is a space that opens, a door that opens. A trap door that opens. So that your consciousness can drop into what judging is a very superficial aspect of, and meaningless, really. It only has meaning in the, and it does have meaning, because it gets either indulged, self-righteously as correct, or denied, self-righteously as incorrect. Which is all judgmental, right? The self-righteous aspect is a very judgmental aspect. So it gets followed and war gets made with God on your side, or it gets repressed and you are crushed because God has left you, left your side. And both of those are the creation of heaven and hell. But the trap door into your consciousness is just to see, judging, I'm judging, so what? So what?

There is conditioning in these minds-streams, and they have to do with image, which is what you were talking about, or they have to do, they have to do with everything. It is **conditioning**. But what we are drawn by, what has brought us here, is closer, deeper, than any conditioning. So to get hung up on the conditioning and to try to change it, is to overlook, again, what the conditioning is a protection for. And almost universally, there is fear that must be met. The deepest, primal fear. In the meeting it, maybe there are other emotions to be met, maybe there is just calmness, a space. But the **fear** is based on the fear that who I am is subject to nonexistence. Because you **know** in your experience and in your heart of hearts, who you **think** you are, is definitely subject to nonexistence. You know your body is subject to nonexistence. You know your whole genetic code is subject to nonexistence.

So to realize that who You are is not subject to nonexistence, this fear, which is the knot of identification, **mis**-identification, must be met. And the meeting of it, happens in a finger snap. The dance around it, millions of years. The strategies to fix it, millions of years. But in a finger snap. I mean, we have seen it now, just twice, just like this. It is like, "Oh". So this arising out of past habits, out of past homage that you have paid to this religion. Who knows how long they will continue. Doesn't matter. You have the key now, you have the file now. That is self-inquiry. Of course the ego, the mind structure of your self, as identified solely as body, takes self-inquiry and makes that superego. So there has to be this willingness, "Okay, I am ignorant. I am ignorant. So what? I am stupid. So what? I missed it, so what? I blew it, so what?"

But **really**, SO WHAT? Then there is space to investigate what those thoughts protect one from.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

GANGAJI: You are welcome. You are very welcome.

BARBARA:

It is absolutely never what you think. Isn't that a miracle. Well, this is our last episode of 2025. It continues to be my absolute joy to open Gangaji's archives to you, to all the listeners worldwide.

I truly hope it has been a support to you, and today I am going to invite you to support this podcast, to support the work of the Gangaji Foundation in sending out this invitation to peace to the world. It really does reach around the world, a hundred and fifty plus countries listening to this podcast, and it also reaches behind prison walls. Thousands of inmates across the country have access to some of these recordings in a special course for prisoners. There is so much that we can do and give in sending this message out, and if you are at all touched by this offering then you know what the benefit will be to another.

If you would like to make a donation to the foundation, you can go to the website, gangaji.org, that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot org. Every gift, large and small is, I promise you, it will be well used.

I look forward to connecting with you in the new year and I wish you and your family a joyous holiday. I thank you for listening, truly. My name is Barbara Denempont. Until next time.