

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 92
Host Barbara Denempont
The Deeper Healing of Trauma
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GANGAJI: That's right. It blew your world apart. That's the shock. But there is some sense that you are not actually all the way through the shock, and that is why I am pulling you back into the fear. That is what I mean when I say "facing the fear." There is a deeper healing.

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

Today I wanted to bring you this particular exchange. I found it very moving. It's on the topic of trauma. There's an enormous amount of trauma in the world and perhaps in your life — I know I have experienced it in mine — and there is a way of course that that deep-seated fear that comes from trauma can take hold in our lives, in our body, in our memories. And of course we may try to protect ourselves from that feeling again. But in this exchange, Gangaji is pointing to something that is very simple and very profound, that the real healing of trauma isn't found from escaping the fear but in meeting it with love and consciousness. And she invites us, perhaps counterintuitively, to open to the wound and see what it reveals.

(Excerpted from: Retreat with Gangaji, Silver Bay, NY, September 19, 2005)

PARTICIPANT: When you were talking about a fear. To be honest, I'm dealing with trauma.

GANGAJI: That's appropriate fear.

PARTICIPANT: Do you mean that fear?

GANGAJI: No, that's appropriate, isn't it?

PARTICIPANT: To be honest, it is...

GANGAJI: When you have been traumatized, there is fear.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: So I'm talking about a fear that becomes a neurosis or something replayed. When was the trauma?

PARTICIPANT: Nine eleven.

GANGAJI: Yeah, well now it's really time to face that fear.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I know. It feels like it is.

GANGAJI: It's four years. That war is over. There are many other wars that are continuing.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, that is what it feels like. That's why, I sort of don't want to be, the fears, I don't want there to be another fear anymore. I am sort of coming out of it. There is sort of this, facing fear, or going through fear, sometimes it feels sort of...

GANGAJI: Counterintuitive...

PARTICIPANT: Spiritualized, something I had to, and...

GANGAJI: So how are you getting out of it?

PARTICIPANT: I am just coming out of it.

GANGAJI: Have you gotten support.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I did a little thing ...

GANGAJI: And what was the little thing, how did it work? Like desensitizing or something, or...

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, body work, therapy.

GANGAJI: And in that, did the fear arise to be experienced?

PARTICIPANT: Well to be honest, I never felt fear like this in my life. And I felt it for four years, and it sort of, maybe if I heard you before I went through this fear, and you were talking about fear, I would say, "Oh, I know what you are talking about." Now it feels like, I can't imagine everybody having, having to have to go through fear like this, I don't think you are saying that, right?

GANGAJI: Well, I am trying to find out exactly what you are saying about this fear, because there is a way... What I am saying, let me say this. Is not about dwelling in fear, which is what I am hearing.

PARTICIPANT: Well the fear is in my body ...

GANGAJI: Yeah, and so you are getting body work, and I support that, there are many supports for really releasing what gets physiological.

PARTICIPANT: And also I think, it was so intense, I think the trying to get out of it is keeping me in it.

GANGAJI: That's my point. That's my point exactly, that's all I am saying, you are haunted by it when you are trying to get out of it. That's right. That's it. That's all I am saying.

PARTICIPANT: Okay, okay.

GANGAJI: Okay, good. Great.

PARTICIPANT: That's it?

GANGAJI: And what I am saying when I am say "face it" it is really, I am saying meet it, I am saying, "Okay, this was a huge trauma." Unexpected, unknowable, and it got in the body, and when your consciousness actually meets it, not dwelling in it but meeting it. There is a discovery of what's, of its substance, of its, it is actually a liberation of fear. It is not you that gets liberated, you are already free.

PARTICIPANT: You see, it sort of opened me up, and in certain ways, it is why I am here, and...

GANGAJI: Yeah, that's right.

PARTICIPANT: It felt like I saw my mind to be honest, you know, like a cliché that you don't know anything. I really saw it, and I think it scared me.

GANGAJI: Yeah, because it is huge, it is tremendous. But this is incredible, because even in this horrendous event, and the suffering that is caused, there is an ally present.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: That's about opening and seeing what has never been seen. That is all I am speaking about when I am saying, "Face what you are avoiding facing." And for every animal it gets down to fear, but it can be many other emotions: rage, or grief, or despair.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, yeah. It's a lot, you know nine/eleven, and to be here is a lot, you know, both of them. It's not like ordinary life, you know, it's, it's...

GANGAJI: Yeah, it's unusual. How did you happen to be here?

PARTICIPANT: Well, I saw you after nine/eleven I went to see you. It was like I heard you clearer, even though I was all messed up, I heard you clearer than before nine/eleven, you know.

GANGAJI: Yeah, because there was an opening. All over New York there was an opening. There was a vulnerability and a horror, but even in that horror there was a connection, a connecting point. Well that is still here.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, yeah.

GANGAJI: And the real healing of the trauma, is bringing your love and consciousness to it.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: And that's why we have these retreats in these places of peace. And sometimes it can be quite a challenge to be in a place of peace where you are not distracted by the noise of the city, or the...

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: I mean, just to look out at the lake, tonight is a full moon, maybe it will be a clear night, just to let the, let nature enter.

PARTICIPANT: One of the things that is going on like talking to you, and listening to you say so for three years, maybe that happened four years ago, I am having difficulty like which is which. It is sort of like, now you are talking about a fear of not identifying with the ego, and um, and then there is, so that has to bring up a lot, and this, so it is almost like when I hear you talk, it is almost like I am, and for a while now, it is sort of in which is which.

GANGAJI: Well, they are like the same, finally.

PARTICIPANT: All I can say is, nothing that I thought or any structure that I came up with, held.

GANGAJI: That's right, it blew your world apart.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: That's the shock. But there is some sense that you are not actually all the way through the shock, and that is why I am pulling you back into the fear, that is what facing the, that is what I mean when I say "facing the fear." There is a deeper healing.

PARTICIPANT: It felt like um, you know, people literally disappearing, like vaporizing, like really brought up, like, well what are we, if we can disappear.

GANGAJI: That's right. And that is terrifying, that's right. And there is a way in actually recognizing that in fact, this form could have disappeared then and will disappear some day. And both are unexpected. And to meet that, rather than to be

haunted by that, is actually to turn and face it. It is facing your own death, and death of all you know. But the horror of that is actually just in circling it, because then you are feeling it, but you are advancing and retreating, and advancing and retreating, so this is just like, "Okay, what is at the bottom of that, what is at the core of that?" This is what Ramana did as a young boy, because his father died, and for him that was hugely traumatic.

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: So death was in the air.

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: And he just laid down and faced it. And discovered who dies, who disappears. We know that bodies disappear. What are you thinking?

PARTICIPANT: I am thinking who dies.

GANGAJI: So you know people die. When you say, "who dies" to yourself, what dies here?

PARTICIPANT: Well my body dies.

GANGAJI: Definitely.

PARTICIPANT: I feel that if I believed what you are saying, I wouldn't be traumatized.

GANGAJI: Yeah, but I don't want you to believe it.

PARTICIPANT: I mean, I do believe it, you know.

GANGAJI: I understand, belief is not enough. You know, you really aren't satisfied with believing it or, because you want to believe it. I am not speaking of heaven, or reincarnation, or that you as you think yourself are will last in any way, all of that disappears. But what is left, that is what has to be discovered, and that can be discovered. But it won't be discovered by thought.

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: It is discovered by diving here, and if fear is experienced here, it is diving, and you say, "Okay, I am coming through, I don't care if you are there."

PARTICIPANT: I don't care if I am dead?

GANGAJI: "I don't care if fear is here, I am coming through." Because you know fear keeps people from a lot of things, but it hasn't kept you from being here. And someone spoke last night, I think, about being afraid, but just having to come up here. So there is a force bigger than that fear and that's the connection. What are you experiencing?

PARTICIPANT: I am out of the fear, you know.

GANGAJI: So what's there?

PARTICIPANT: Love.

GANGAJI: That's right. That's what lasts, that is what is real, everything else is temporary. Everyone has been traumatized, the human experience is an experience of trauma, if not in this life, it's in your genes. It's passed on. Because it is, and because trauma is also a way that we grow. Just like a plant, if you prune it, it grows thicker, richer, deeper. So it is in everyone here. Some more than in others. Some nervous systems can take it, some plants can take pruning better than others, but you are a bunch of weeds, and be glad, because you survive no matter what. And the experience of trauma and healing from that, it has its time, but when it has been four years, or thirty years, or fifty years, then there is a possibility of revisiting it, and opening the wound, actually. Because the wound is festering, and when the wound is festering, it's infiltrating into the whole system. So it is opening the wound, rather than just trying to cover it, or fix it, or go to rub something on it, or ignore it, or get rid of it. Opening it, diving into it with your consciousness.

You know Stuart said, working so hard in the corporate world actually got him here, but really, it's your wound that you here. So there is the horror of it, and there is the ally in it. Because once you have been really wounded, you are disillusioned. You can't really buy it the way you bought it before, and maybe there is cynicism and a loss of innocence, but even that doesn't fix it.

So when we talk abstractly about not identifying with the ego or, all of that is just a way of saying, "You haven't been wounded." You have experienced a wound, but you haven't been wounded, and the only way you know that you haven't been wounded, is to go back in. You have experienced hell, but you haven't been in hell. And the only way you know that, is go to hell, check it out. And this is the fast quick way. As Papaji was saying, "There are yogas, you know, that take a lot of time." Here I go. A lot of time, and you really work, and you, lifetime, after lifetime, after lifetime, and if you are talented, and you are good, you get there. But this is like this. Just like that. And it's ruthless, relentless, radical, and at times extremely painful. But when the intention is to be free, anything can be born. Anything and everything will be born.

There is so much trauma in this world. There is so much misery. We are letting children starve all over the world, every country. We are still letting people be sold into slavery, sold as child prostitutes. We are deforesting our planet, and polluting our oceans, our drinking water. I mean, there is a lot of trauma in the world. Not to mention your particular body, or psyche, or your parents. So everywhere you look there is an opportunity, not to close down and be cynical or protected, even the closing down and be protected has its place. I am not saying that is wrong, but to actually discover in the face of it all, in the fact of it all, what remains whole, what remains innocent, what is still here, still radiant, still free?

BARBARA:

I know even talking about trauma can trigger something in our brains. And, of course then that is always an opportunity to see what is deeper, and where this deeper healing can be.

I want to encourage you to take full advantage of all of the resources available on the Gangaji website. Not only the blogs and the videos and the podcasts, but also to remind you about the *With Gangaji* program. It's a global online community that comes together with Gangaji and each other to just support each other in spiritual inquiry. I would love to welcome you there just as I get to welcome you here. You can find out more about the program at gangaji.org, that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot org.

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