

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 93
Host Barbara Denempont
Meeting Self-Hatred, Discovering Freedom
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GANGAJI: There are unspeakable horrors. Human to human, human to other species, human to the planet. And that that very trauma can be the awakening force. It often is. It's not always, though. There's a crossroads in that shock. And we have a choice.

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

This month in our Prison Program Newsletter *Freedom Inside* we have been exploring the themes of self-hatred and unworthiness, what we might also want to call feeling unlovable. What we saw in the voices of the prisoners is that, regardless of their often dire circumstances, it is possible to no longer be bound by unworthiness.

So I wanted to bring this topic here again. It is not new to this podcast, but I have to say, reading the news, watching television right now and seeing what is happening in the world, it feels essential. It feels so important for us to understand what it is to end this habit of self-hatred. Because when I look at what is happening in the world, the aggression, the violence, this heart-breaking wholesale destruction, it is a self-destruction and it is escalating. And it isn't just out there. It actually reflects what happens in our own minds.

So the question arises, "How do we meet this in ourselves?" Because I believe there is real value, profound value, in meeting your own self-hatred, in meeting that feeling of being unlovable and no longer being bound by it. Because when you are no longer at war with yourself you might discover that you don't have to be at war with anyone else, not really. And from that freedom, your life is available. It is open, it is present and it becomes an expression of peace on this planet.

So let's take this time together to take a look without judgment at how unworthiness, about how being unlovable, can be liberated, and what that reveals.

(Excerpted from: Retreat with Gangaji, San Rafael, CA, March 16, 2000
& Retreat with Gangaji, Garrison, NY, September 20, 2010.)

GANGAJI: Hi.

PARTICIPANT: Last night was my first time here, in your presence, and I guess I have come because I asked for help to open up to my truth. Because I am terrified, and I have been terrified for a long time. I have done a lot of work, and I think that I am, for the last fourteen years in depth therapy and know of abuse, know pain and suffering, but I do not know, it is hard for me to open to the beauty and to the love, especially of myself. It is like there is, I was taught there is no God for me and that there is a big part that believed that. And it is like, okay, I am ready now to move on from therapy.

GANGAJI: Great. You see you speak to very many.

(audience applause)

PARTICIPANT: But I don't know where to go from here, because it is like...

GANGAJI: That is okay.

PARTICIPANT: I want to play, I want to love, I want to do, and it is like all I know is hell.

GANGAJI: That is not all you know. That is a big part of what you know, as you said, that is a lot of what you know. But you did not say all a moment ago. There is something else, some force, some power that saw you through the hell.

PARTICIPANT: But it seems like it is small.

GANGAJI: I understand it is like it is small, especially in comparison to the hell. But, and you have put a lot of attention on the hell, and hell is calling for a lot of attention. But just right now, as we sit here together, if you just shift your attention to that little space of light that is already open. You don't have to do anything about opening it. It is very simple. However small it is, just a drop even, just a speck, that is fine. Just put your attention there.

PARTICIPANT: It is like I get afraid, and then I disassociate, and then I...

GANGAJI: Yes, you are afraid of the light? Are you afraid it will go away, or what is the story you tell yourself?

PARTICIPANT: I am not sure, I, when I connect, like for now it is like I am through with whatever.

GANGAJI: Yes, well that is a nanosecond

PARTICIPANT: It is wonderful, but then it is like overwhelming, and I disassociate, I go...

GANGAJI: How do you know you disassociate?

PARTICIPANT: It is like I cannot stay in touch with that. It is like then all of the voices come, and everything says that that is not right.

GANGAJI: That, "You cannot have that..."

PARTICIPANT: No.

GANGAJI: "That is not for you."

PARTICIPANT: No. And it is like I want to just let the voices go.

GANGAJI: But you have wanted that for some time. Right?

PARTICIPANT: Yes, I have wanted truth since I started this therapy, I mean, I wasn't really ever doing therapy.

GANGAJI: That is the whole point of therapy. That is what therapy is founded on, is to really get you at truth, at freedom, to assist you in discovering that the courage to actually surrender to the light.

PARTICIPANT: I still have so much shame and blame.

GANGAJI: Yes, shame and blame, right? I just heard a really interesting radio show about shame, and that shame is a strategy for survival. I think what he was really pointing to is like shock. Like how animals go into shock. Have you ever seen a rabbit or something that has been caught by another animal? There is a point where there is no struggle, you know, it is just. And there is a whole body language of shame, which is a head drops, you know, it is as if, "I am not here." You know, it is an invisibility and a disassociation that is part of shame. So, just while you are here, right here with me, are you willing to be completely ashamed? To not fight the shame. Really, all of the way ashamed.

PARTICIPANT: It is like...

GANGAJI: That is something else though, it is not shame. What is that?

PARTICIPANT: It is almost shame for my own self, for what I have done, for my own killing, for what I had done as a child. That I cannot forgive myself for.

GANGAJI: So forget forgiving yourself, you don't have to forgive yourself.

PARTICIPANT: I cannot accept that it in me, I know what it is like to kill.

GANGAJI: Yes, forget acceptance. Forget acceptance. I am just asking you to feel one emotion all of the way through. So the shame led you to the hate, right? Are you willing to feel the hate all of the way through, just this one emotion that has nothing to do with forgiveness, or acceptance, or being better, or worse, or.... Just the emotion, itself, all of the way through.

PARTICIPANT: I just want to destroy myself from that.

GANGAJI: To die?

PARTICIPANT: I just, there is so much cruelty in the hatred.

GANGAJI: Yes, but I am not speaking of the cruelty, because you have to do something with it. Right?

PARTICIPANT: Right, and so the hatred is for myself.

GANGAJI: Yes, I understand it is for yourself. That is also for other people too, it is the same thing. But I am just asking you, I know it is, it is not therapy, it is.... Maybe it is some kind of therapy, but I am not interested in you doing anything with the hatred. I am not even interested in you getting rid of it. I want you to meet it. Just to really meet it, purely. It may be impossible to believe, but the hatred itself, at the core has a treasure, has a gift. What are you experiencing?

PARTICIPANT: Some compassion.

GANGAJI: Some compassion. Now, just for a moment. Don't tell yourself any story about this compassion. Just, let's use compassion as an emotion, and experience this compassion all the way. Just as I asked you to experience the hatred, now you just experience this compassion. Not to keep it, not to get rid of it, just as an experience of what it has to give you in the core of it. What is that?

PARTICIPANT: It is like a freedom.

GANGAJI: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: It is like a freedom.

GANGAJI: That is the secret.

(sobbing)

GANGAJI: What is happening now?

PARTICIPANT: It is nice to be free.

GANGAJI: You are beautiful.

PARTICIPANT: Oh no.

(Getting camera to take a photo)

GANGAJI: Oh yes. You have to see it because...

PARTICIPANT: Oh, it has got to not work like last night. Oh good.

GANGAJI: Oh boy. You won't believe it, You won't believe it. (click.)

(applause)

GANGAJI: (click) So I will keep one, and I will give you one. And you will see, you will see, you cannot hide it. This is it, this self-hatred, this knowledge of the horror that we are **each** responsible for, and the attempt to escape that, and to fix that, and to get away from that. Just to stop and experience it.

And what is natural, **natural**, nothing you have to learn or do, is compassion, is freedom. This can never be figured out by the mind, because it does not make sense. It has nothing to do with you did so many things, so therefore you get to be free. Or you did not do so many things, so you do not get to be free. This is the good news for all of us. This is beautiful.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

GANGAJI: Oh this is very beautiful. Very beautiful?

GANGAJI: The horrors of what it means to be a conscious human being, to not be in denial, to be aware of this very moment. All over the globe, maybe down the street there are unspeakable horrors. Human to human, human to other species, human to the planet. And that that very trauma can be the awakening force. It often is. Just the shock of death or the shock of pain. It's not always, though. There's a crossroads in that shock. And we have a choice. One choice is to open fully, to really discover directly and deeply what is it to be a conscious human being, all the way in the core. And the other choice, which is maybe more often taken, is a choice of cynicism and closing, and anger, fury, righteous fury, legitimate fury, and despair. Which, however deep, they are, deeply they are felt, are still on the periphery. So I recognize the despair at horror and the anger at horror and the fear of horror. And I invite us all to let that drive us more deeply into falling, into the core of what holds it all.

So as children we are innocent. And if we are taken care of well, we, this innocence maintains itself for a while. And then we start to get the shocks of what it means to grow up. And some of us retreat from those shocks and try to be like children again. And some of us assume that we are grown up when we are cynical, when we are angry, when we are fed up with the whole mess. But really growing up is closer than cynicism and closer than the innocence of a child. It's not an ignorant innocence. It's in the fully seeing it all that still, there is this exquisite, undeniable yes in the core.

BARBARA:

What a powerful exchange and monologue. I am supremely grateful to the woman who shared her heart so deeply, so openly, and for this message from Gangaji. And I would like to share one more reflection from an inmate in our *Freedom Inside* prison program course. We offered inmates a simple inquiry to notice what feels most unlovable and to meet it without judgment. And here is one response that came back.

"I felt like the weight of a trillion pounds was on my shoulders. I felt guilt, shame, embarrassment. But after sitting in that space for a while, I began to have compassion towards myself. I asked, "What is the root of my self-hatred?" I was shocked. It went as deep as my birth. After writing it all out and letting the weight move through me, I gave myself compassion. These are all traits of my personality and I am not my personality. I am beyond that. I am pure love."

He really offers us the proof of what is possible, even in very harsh circumstances. This piece that we shared with prisoners *Liberating Unworthiness* is also available as one of Gagnaji's blogs on the website gagnaji.org, that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot o-r-g, where you can also find out more about the prison program.

And if you are listening today and you are in harms way in any way, please know that you are held deeply in our hearts.

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