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Host Barbara Denempont
The Wheel of Doubt
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GANGAJI: Only today, in particular, I want to speak about the wheel of doubt, how the mind generates doubt because of the fear to actually be open, to be still, to not know.

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

I think we can all agree that doubt serves a real purpose. It can help us pause, to discern and to protect ourselves. But when it becomes a pointed search for certainty, we can find ourselves caught in what Gangaji calls “the wheel of doubt.” We can all relate to that I think, something we are turning over and over again in our minds, we are looking for the right answer in every direction. And there is a certainty that we imagine will finally give us peace. But certainty is fleeting, amazingly, and even after a moment of certainty, doubt can arise again. It is really in the willingness not to know, that we can open to what is fueling the suffering.

I want to share two recordings today that I think complement each other. The first is Gangaji speaking directly to the theme of doubt from an online gathering. The second is an exchange from a meeting in Mill Valley with a woman who had just had a deep recognition in the midst of a Zen meditation retreat or *Sesshin*.

Together these two pieces bring home the invitation Gangaji is offering: to recognize the activity of mind and to recognize what is always present, always here, regardless of what thoughts are passing through.

(Excerpted from: Online Meeting with Gangaji…)

GANGAJI (monologue): Doubt, our big topic for the day, or really for a lifetime. It’s an essential topic for inquiry, really being willing to have an empty, open mind and experience what is giving rise to a full, active, busy mind, a suffering mind.

I have mentioned before in here and in different programs the strategies of mind. I think it is really important that we recognize that all these seemingly uncomfortable, or in-the-way or unenlightened aspects of ourselves actually have a basis in a strategy, a legitimate strategy. And in particular doubt, or questioning something, not believing something, holding back from something, is a survival strategy. It is an

offshoot of fear. It is the fear made manifest in thought. And it is legitimate, absolutely legitimate. I mean, there are many things that we need to doubt, that we should have doubted when we didn't, that we are able to step back and have a discussion with oneself or someone else about what is real here, what is really wanted, what is the truth here. So, in that sense, doubt really serves a great purpose.

Only today, in particular, I want to speak about the wheel of doubt, how the mind generates doubt because of the fear to actually be open, to be still, to not know. This may just be under the surface of conscious thought. You just may hear even a hum but you know that you are not experiencing the depth of your being, or you know you are not recognizing the truth of what is always here because of some seeming obstacle or barrier. And if you are willing to look closer and willing to overhear yourself, what you are saying to yourself, even if you don't need to say the words again because you have said them so many times, so you just are creating or generating a reaction to the invitation to not know, to open to the infinite truth of yourself. Of course, I have said often that fear, it is natural for fear to be here. Certainly, it was my experience. When Papaji told me to stop, and I actually heard the depth of that, the challenge of that, I was really afraid. In a sense, that was doubting. I was doubting the intelligence for me to stop. I understood it for someone else, but for me to stop. Well, I knew that I kept very busy to keep away the demons of my past and to maintain myself as a good person. I suspected that at the root I was a bad person and so if I did not maintain my goodness I would regress into some atavistic badness.

So, it is a challenge and I want to invite you to experience it as a challenge because that's the proof of the depth of what's being asked here. When you ask, *Who am I?* and you don't know the answer, you haven't memorized the answer, but you really open to that. Or you ask yourself, *What is always here?* and you open to that. Then, if there is fear, there is no problem. You can recognize that as just an aspect of this opening to the unknown. But if you look a little deeper into your thought structure, if you are willing to overhear your thoughts, you will hear some hum, at least, of doubt. And you can recognize that because it is a withdrawal, it is a pulling back, it is a "not now". It is a protection, and as protection, as all protection has at its basis, the legitimacy of survival. We can respect that. But in a moment of inquiry, in a moment of safety, you don't need to obey that. You can recognize it, you can respect it, it's not bad or wrong. But it needn't be obeyed. You can open. The invitation is to open.

When I often speak of Papaji saying "stop" to me, he was really inviting me to open. And we have all had experiences in the past where opening turned out to not be the best thing to do. We have all been lied to. We have been cheated. We have been fooled. There have been false promises made and our lives perhaps have been threatened because of believing in somebody or some thing, following somebody or something. So if we respect all of that, that's all part of the individual mind stream. If it's not wrong, we can take an opportunity, like now in this safe space, in your room, wherever you are hearing this, and be willing to open. And in that willingness to open, be willing to see, discover if doubt arises. To see the doubt, to hear the doubt, to feel the doubt, and if it arises, to recognize it is about survival. It is there to take care of your survival and it has become a habit with most people. In this moment, your survival is not the issue. The next moment it may be. In the past moment

maybe it was. But in this instant, it's not. So anything you are saying to yourself; anything about the past, about the future, about the present, even, you can be still, you can open. As Ramana said, that's the last obstacle. And as Papaji elaborated, "And that's no obstacle at all!" because it has no substance. It has mental ideation but no substance, no reality. What has reality is what is here that is always here, discoverable in times of safety and discoverable in times of danger. What is always here.

So, always, that is what our conversations are about and these themes just direct us by using certain words that perhaps trigger certain states. We can recognize that behind those states is the intelligence to open, to truly question, to truly inquire rather than to inquire about something that may be happening to you or may happen to you if you open. To open and inquire: *What is here? What is always here?* And then you see that's the simplicity of it. And then you also see the value that you put on your self-doubt. I mean, since it is an effective survival strategy, the doubting itself, we do put great value on it. But the question becomes: do you put more value on your doubting mind than you do on the reality of what is always present.

I have spoken of vigilance before in these meetings and online, other online meetings, and in print and in person. But really, vigilance is fed by where you place your value, by what has the greatest worth for you. And for an instant you are asked to just put aside your great worth, your natural worth of survival, and to open to what is here regardless of your survival, before you were even born to survive, after you die when the question of survival is irrelevant.

That is the depth of the questions that are asked. And this theme is in support of that. We can have meetings with themes, meetings without themes. It's always about this. We all use different words to point, different descriptions, relating different experiences. But always, what do you value? What do you value even more than your body's survival, your individual survival, your differences, your victories, your defeats? Your information? What do you value more than your information?

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(Excerpted from Open Meeting, Strawberry Recreation Center, Mill Valley, CA, April 9, 2016)

GANGAJI: Hello.

PARTICIPANT: Hello. I have always wanted to meet you.

GANGAJI: Oh, thank you.

PARTICIPANT: So I live at Green Gulch, and we just did a *Sesshin*. And what happened during the *Sesshin* was a shift in consciousness…

GANGAJI: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: … just a, a realization of like, wow this is really it. And then I noticed that the mind was still there, that there was still thoughts, and still insecurities, and

the other day I found a tick on me, and then I lost it in my room, and I had like this panic attack. But still while having this panic attack, I was like…it's not a problem, but the body, or the, the conditions and the causes just all have, just make me react like this. So I guess my question is how do I let go of habits, or just continue watching the personality, or like how does the mind just a, a realization of like, wow this is really it.

GANGAJI: So, if you were able to do that, because there are yogic ways, you know, Zen is one of the yogic ways, and you actually were able to get to a space where nothing bothered you, ticks or disease, what would that give you?

PARTICIPANT: What's the question?

GANGAJI: You're very good. Very good. Very good, excellent! Very Zen, isn't she? Excellent. You've had a real moment. I really acknowledge that moment in you. And then there, the mechanism of the body-mind comes back. But once you have had a real moment, it's not the same.

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: And that's what I'm hearing from you.

PARTICIPANT: Right. It's as if things are happening, and then there's still the stillness, the, the mind says, "Oh, this is all new, you've never had the awareness", but my experience says, "This is how it's always been, this is just it." And even if I forget it, it's, it still is.

GANGAJI: It doesn't forget you.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: So there is a way to honor that, because it can slip back into just another memory, or another experience, another object.

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: So it's fresh now, it's alive in you, and there's a way to honor it, and you know, one of the great ways is just being still for some part of the day. That's what your meditation practice is about. But often what I found with, with Buddhist practices, is that the teachers would never acknowledge that that was a real moment, that was a *satori*, that was it.

And it was so thrilling to meet Papaji, where he would say, "Yes! Yes! Don't go back from that." So to treasure it without objectifying it, is really a call to surrender. To recognize the activity of the mind, and to recognize this spaciousness of surrender. To find the tick, to get rid of the tick, to survive

PARTICIPANT: Yes

GANGAJI: Yes! And to recognize what is free of that, that drive too.

PARTICIPANT: It feels, or seems, or the way that I'm seeing now, it's, it's as if I'm a faceless face, it…and just watching the body breathe instead of…I don't know, it's just, it's weird to put it in words, but it's…

GANGAJI: Yes, you can't, but still you must try!

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: You're the subject, not the object.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, and I have another question.

GANGAJI: Yes, I don't believe it.

PARTICIPANT: I am a singer…

GANGAJI: Oh good.

PARTICIPANT: And.

GANGAJI: And you want to sing for us. Yes!

PARTICIPANT: Oh! That's not what I was going to say, but I will sing, I don't mind.

GANGAJI: Good, good good. That's what, that's our question for you, will you sing?

PARTICIPANT: Well, I know that the answer is 'don't worry about it, life will take care of you…'

GANGAJI: Oh good, if you know the answer, you don't need me to say it.

PARTICIPANT: But I kind of want to hear more about like…

GANGAJI: Oh it's fine, it's good, you let life take care of you, you'll be fine.

PARTICIPANT: So the personality doesn't change, it just…you just, I don't understand about dreams or like…

GANGAJI: Not like you think it will, na…don't worry, yeah, yeah! If you like, study dreams.

PARTICIPANT: Not dreaming, but like dreams themselves.

GANGAJI: Drea-eams, yes. Yeah, do as you choose. Papaji used to say, "Wake up, that's the first thing." And then…

PARTICIPANT: And then.

GANGAJI: …do what you like." Then you see, oh what's, what affinity for this life form, what, what is it drawn to, what…

PARTICIPANT: Right.

GANGAJI: What are its talents?

PARTICIPANT: So follow the heart…

GANGAJI: Yes!

PARTICIPANT: …listen to the heart.

GANGAJI: Follow the heart, live the heart.

PARTICIPANT: I guess because I live at a Zen center, and we're very quiet, and I'm very enthusiastic…

GANGAJI: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: …and loud, and not Zen, I'm like…

GANGAJI: Yeah, well welcome to our rowdy group!

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, I'm like, is this, should I be quieting myself to…

GANGAJI: At the Zen center, definitely.

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, but yeah.

GANGAJI: You'll sing for us?

PARTICIPANT:

GANGAJI:

PARTICIPANT: Sure, does anybody have a request?

Singing:

I sing because I'm happy,
I sing because I'm free.
His eyes on the sparrow,
And I know I'm watching me.'

(Audience Applauds)

GANGAJI: That's it folks! That's it! And it got to you. It penetrated.
Thank you for this meeting. Such a joy! Such a privilege.
May All Being be happy, may All Being be free. May All Being sing.

BARBARA:

I love sharing these recordings with you but I actually think there is something I love more which is welcoming you to a live meeting with Gangaji. Because a live meeting is our time to gather, a time for you to bring your inquiry, to listen in support, and just be part of a meeting as it unfolds. And who knows, maybe one day I will be sharing your exchange on the podcast.

There are three opportunities to meet with Gangaji in September including an online public meeting. And I want to note if you are listening from Australia or New Zealand or just "Down Under", this meeting time will be especially good for you because, while it will be a Saturday evening meeting here in the States, it's going to be a Sunday morning meeting "Down Under" and so it's a chance to join in the morning. And, of course that's much better than the usual middle of the night. So I want you to know we are thinking about you. I know you are listening and we thank you for that. So we hope to see you at that meeting and you can find all the specific dates, times and details for all of Gangaji's upcoming events on the calendar, and of course much more, at gangaji.org that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot o-r-g.

Always, I thank you for listening.

My name is Barbara Denempont. Until next time.