

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 10
Host Barbara Denempont
What Will Enlightenment Really Give Me?
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[00:00] MUSIC

[00:08] GANGAJI: If you have nothing, then you only have yourself. And when you only, truly, only have yourself, you are awake.

[00:21] BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. I'm very happy to welcome you here today, and I first wanted to share with you a little bit about my inspiration for this particular podcast.

The Gangaji Foundation has a prison program, and part of that program is we have volunteers corresponding with prisoners, and I happen to be corresponding with a prisoner. And in the course of our conversation, we've been having a very heartfelt inquiry into the subject of redemption. And I began to wonder, what is it that I really mean by "redemption"? What is it that he's speaking about? What would that give me? What would that look like?

That got me onto this topic of spiritual desires. There are many different kinds of spiritual desires. Redemption is one, enlightenment, *Samadhi* – there's a huge variety of spiritual powers that we seek, and spiritual states and experiences that we are hoping for. So I wanted to dive into that, and I found this wonderful monologue recorded in 2002.

Let's take a listen.

(Excerpted from San Diego, CA Public Meeting, February 7, 2002
Transcript file: "02-07-02 San Diego Public Meet.doc")

[01:35] GANGAJI: Last night a couple of times in the conversations there was reference to wheels. Wheels of spinning, karmic wheels, genetic wheels, habitual wheels, and how that's where the mind gets fixated or grooved, and in that attention gets locked up and narrowed and limited. This is what's referred to as bondage or *samsara*. And the breaking loose of that the penetration of the groove, of the habit, then frees attention. So I would say that everyone in here is aware of the worldly wheel. And the fact that worldly desires lead to the perpetuation of suffering. Right? You have at least heard that, and investigated it to some degree or another. Some very deep investigations and from that, of course, a realization that there's a price paid for following worldly desires. And the price is your life. There is pleasure, of course, in the attainment, as there is pain in the loss. But the deepening of the life doesn't happen until there is a willingness to see the limitation of worldly desires.

But really what I want to speak to you about are spiritual desires, because I have noticed that there is a subtle but deadly transference of worldly desire to spiritual desire and then it's okay. And there is wondering, "Why am I suffering?" Papaji spoke once about, "If you desire freedom above all, then this desire will in itself annihilate all other desires." And that's true. So the desire for freedom or the desire for love or the desire for truth or the desire for God is not a problem, these are desires that swallow all desires. But the problem, and it's one that I see quite often and hear from people quite often, not the desire for truth or the desire for enlightenment, but the desire that truth or enlightenment give certain results, or look a certain way, or feel a certain way. The desire that, "I really want to be enlightened because I found out that being a success did not give me happiness," or "I really want to be enlightened so that I will be happy and never have to be sad again." And then there is a confusion and a wondering, "Why, why can't I be happy? I just want enlightenment."

So I would like for you to really investigate into your own mind, and see if there is any image of Truth or Freedom or enlightenment or God. And if there is an image, I would like for you just to let it go. As an experiment, as our experiment here together, just let it go, drop it. And if there is an expectation associated with God, "If I am true to God, God will give me perfect health, perfect wealth, immortality, etc." You know the list. The list you have tucked in your little special ritual drawer.

Just for purposes of investigation, if you would be willing to look into your mind and see if there are expectations there. That God, or Truth, or Freedom, or enlightenment will give you some release from life. Some control over life or some transcendence over life. And just for purposes of inquiry, let those expectations go. Surrender them tonight, like you surrendered your shoes at the door. Just surrender them, give them up. And if there is a particular state that you want freedom for, or enlightenment, a state of clarity or a state of oceanic bliss or a state of certainty about your purpose in the world. Just let it go. So that you are stateless, thoughtless, expectationless-ly here.

If there is resistance to letting these hopes go, just recognize that. And I promise you that if you want your expectations back, they will be waiting for you when you leave the room. Your images, your ideas of what will come to pass if you get enlightened, if you wake up, if you realize yourself. Just if you have nothing, if you have nothing, then you only have yourself. And when you only, truly only have yourself, you are awake.

We have in the course of our human history fragmented ourselves, divided ourselves, like a giant cell divides, we have divided into, well, it is uncountable, I don't know how many people are on the planet right now, but you have to multiply that by all the people who have ever been on the planet. Or who would ever be on the planet, and then all the people who are in the imagination, and all the stories that we have read, and all the movies that we have seen, and all of those people, are fragments.

And then not just the people, of course, then there are the oceans, and the mountains, and the ... each speck of dirt, and the flowers, and the weeds, and all the other creatures, microscopic and huge, extinct and alive now. All of them are fragments of yourself, because this is a huge display of the infinite, fathomless, impossible to grasp-ness that is the one facet of yourself.

Because we are just talking about earth here, don't forget there is a whole cosmos, and that's the cosmos that we know about, which each year gets expanded by billions of stars.

So there has been this delightful, mysterious, huge theater of fragmentation, and even more mysteriously and even more delightfully, there is the possibility in any one fragment, especially any one human fragment, especially you. Especially you because in this human fragment there has arisen a desire, a desire to be free, a desire to know God, a desire to realize oneself. And this desire if it is not given form, if it's not given expectation, if it's not given thought, just allowed to be, a huge desire will reveal the whole known and unknown universe. Every infinite particle as one whole-ness that is you.

The very moment, the instant, that you think your desire for God, or freedom, or truth should be like something or should produce some particular result or will look like or will feel like, you withdraw energy from that desire. The mind, your mind withdraws energy and claims it and begins to direct it, based on past readings, based on hopes, based on past experiences.

So then the challenge in a spiritual seeker's heart, as beautiful as the seeking has been, as essential as the seeking has been, is in an instant to stop seeking any thing to fulfill that desire. To let that desire be fulfilled by your whole life. So we are habituated to have a desire, and in this case a supreme desire, and to feed it, to feed it experiences, to feed it knowledge, and to check it, "How big is it? How little is it? Did I feed it. Did I get it? Do I still have it?"

But I am suggesting that that can be reversed, whereas you as a lifeform are the food for that. You aren't the intermediary giving food, giving objects, giving pleasure, giving states of mind, giving images, YOU offer your whole life, the rest of this whole life is offered to that desire. Without knowing what the result will be, without knowing what the state of mind will be, without knowing whether there will be ruination, homelessness, riches, fame, without knowing any of it, to give your - what you have, which is your lifetime, to give that in this moment to what it is you want, which is freedom.

[14:10] MUSIC

[14:16] BARBARA: As always, I hope this podcast is serving you. I have a line-up of new topics that I look forward to bringing you in the coming months, and of course you're always welcome to send me your own topic suggestion. Just write to me, Barb at info@gangaji.org.

And before I sign off here, I just want to take a simple moment to mention Melissa and Tom. They've been doing work on our archives for years now. As they've become more available, more accessible, I'm finding more material. And so I really want to thank them for their diligence and their thoughtfulness in making this available to all of us.

If you have any questions about the work of The Gangaji Foundation and how you might participate, if you would like to find out more about Gangaji's in-person events, or how you can sign up for her on-line meetings, I invite you to go to the website: gangaji.org.

Thank you for listening. Until next time.