

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 20
Host Barbara Denempont
Staying Conscious in Turbulent Times
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[00:00] MUSIC

[00:05] GANGAJI: So in our sophistication as life forms, as human life forms, in our worldliness, in our psychological astuteness, in our pursuit of happiness, we too often lose the direct experience of the boundlessness of love that is life.

[00:35] BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. Today I want to bring you one of Gangaji's monologues recorded in March of 2011. Perhaps you remember that that was when Japan was struck by a catastrophic earthquake, and then that was followed by a tsunami just minutes later. It was a terrible shock that really was heard around the world.

So of course that's very relevant to all of us today as we are confronting the realities of living through a pandemic. And what really struck me about this piece is it moves beyond the conversation about how we cope with great upheaval, and it explores how do we stay conscious in the midst of great upheaval. And when we do stay conscious, what is revealed.

Let's take a listen.

(Excerpted from Portland, OR Open Meeting with Gangaji, March 18, 2011)

[01:34] GANGAJI: David mentioned, I don't know if he used this word, but the tenderness of these times, is the word I would use. We are very tender when our complacency is burst open. You know it's one thing to abstractly know that the earth is alive and changing and upheaval is coming and that's the, the nature of the history of our planet, but to actually experience it, even second hand, is shocking to the system. And it's both a horrible shock because there's so much suffering that's involved in that upheaval from natural causes, or in the Middle East from political causes, or the horrors that are going on in, in cities and neighborhoods and families, and with your own bodies. All over the planet every moment. We can *know* that, but to experience that directly is to be shocked, and to hurt, to feel pain. And also, as the reports that are coming from Japan and coming from New Zealand and from war zones continually reaffirm, that that shock can lead to a, a deep connection or can reveal a connection, the possibility of helping one another, the possibility of offering what one has to another. And that's the beautiful part of the horror, of the horrific grace.

When we are in the midst of some kind of upheaval, if we can be as conscious as possible of both the upheaval and our, possibly, our initial resistance to it, finally our surrender to the fact of it, and then the recognition of what is essential that is revealed in it, which is our love of life, and our, our participation in life in myriad ways, then we can recognize that as the shock wears off and as the, the construction that follows the destructive period begins, we very often go back to sleep. We, we begin to withdraw into our problems rather than, than come out in our solutions.

When David mentioned dialing in, immediately I thought – well the number to dial is zero. And normally we're dialing everything but zero. And that's just the way we're made as human beings. So it's possible to not judge that way we're made as human beings that are after all animals, creatures designed to survive, and so thinking of number one and the other numbers that will constellate around that, to keep that survival, but being able to see through that to zero. And in our sitting together at the beginning of meetings and during meeting and at the end of the meeting, it's possible to recognize that what zero stands for is actually that which – it doesn't even have the circumference of a zero, it's pure space. And then numbers appear in that space and multiply in that space and subtract but are finally leveled by the spaciousness itself, by zero.

And that spaciousness is who you are. And who you are, in which your name has appeared, your body has appeared, your history, your family, your relationships, your personality, your emotions. And in a moment of shattering, whether it's global or personal, all of that, for an instant at least, is removed. And if we are conscious in that removal we recognize what cannot be removed. What is free of numbering, actually, free of loss. In the midst of losing, when we are conscious we can recognize what is free of loss. And if we stay conscious in that, then when the addition of me and my body, me and my family, me and my food, whatever it may be, me and my views, when that appears, we still know what it's appearing in.

Knowing that spaciousness as oneself is different from understanding it. You already know it as understanding, because at least I will assume that everyone in here has had either some experience or some teaching about the connectedness of the universe, either through physics or spirituality. And you, you know, or understand we are all one being as one planet, one life. That's, that's the group that would be drawn to this message. My teacher told me that over twenty years ago and it's true. You already *know* enough, but to experience that and to live your life from that is what is waiting for you, in your surrender to the zero-ness, the spaciousness that is always present.

I lead a group, an online group, and there are people from all over the world on it, it's a webcast and a teleseminar. There is, there is someone from Japan who is on it as well as someone from New Zealand. A couple of people from New Zealand have been posting reports of, of their trauma and of their recognition of – in the moment of surrender and staying conscious to that pain, that trauma, there is great love, and there is great discovery. And then this latest report from someone from Japan also, in the midst of increasing horror, the recognition that silence is here. That's, that's what I mean when I say zero. And that that silence is not a dead flat nothing. It is love and it is life. It is life conscious of itself and in love with itself. And that is at the root of every life form. So in our sophistication as life forms, as human life forms, in our worldliness, in our psychological astuteness, in our pursuit of happiness, we too often lose the direct

experience of the boundlessness of love that is life, without which there would be no you, me, other, and 10,000 things.

So I invite you as always, I invite you to discover *within* the particular form that carries the name that you answer to, within that and outside that there is the spaciousness of Being that knows itself. That recognizes itself internally and externally and recognizes that internal and external are just temporary designations that finally have zero meaning. They may appear, they do appear, because we are sensory creatures. We have a brain, we have nervous systems, we make distinctions between inside and outside, but finally they are distinctions that have no reality. Life knows itself and recognizes itself in discreet form and universally. Then the traumas that appear, geological traumas, political traumas, personal traumas, traumas of disease, traumas of relationship, traumas of loss, can actually serve to crack open the encrustation of thinking of oneself as a number, as a thing, rather than realizing oneself as the space that all things are animated by, enlivened by. And self love is natural then.

You know I use the word “inquiry” a lot because my teacher’s teacher Ramana Maharshi taught inquiry which was essentially the question “Who am I?”. In a real sense we come into the world with that question. Babies come into the world with “Who am I?”. And, and we start to fill in the, the blank: I am this person, this is my mother, this is the breast, this is survival, these are the enemies, this is how I get attention. And we build layer after layer.

So the inquiry that is offered here is a return to “What was here from the beginning of this particular incarnation, when inquiry was fresh but childlike, that is *still* here now in this adult phase where disillusionment has happened, where trauma has happened, where lessons have happened, where bruises have happened, where victories have happened, and where defeats have happened? What is still here, in that innocent inquiry of ‘Who am I?’”

For a baby that’s very concrete, or a child. You can perhaps remember your own babyhood or childhood, and if not you’ve seen babies, you know that they are exploring, they’re discovering and their brains are forming reality. So I’m not asking you to be a baby. It’s really an invitation to be a full adult, and in that full adulthood you actually recognize what the evolution from baby to adult was appearing in, was happening in, was enlivened by – the, the intelligence that is silence, that is life intelligent of itself, inquiring into itself, discovering itself, freshly. Life loving itself in your form, and present when your form is gone.

This is not an abstraction. It’s not a show about inquiry. It’s about your life. When trauma hits, we get to ask that question again “What is my life about?”. When we survive the trauma, we get to live life in a fresh way. And if we are willing to be true to what we discover, that freshness is always present. I guarantee it. It doesn’t mean trials are not also present, they are, I guarantee that too. That is the nature of our universe. But the possibility, whatever is occurring internally or externally, to recognize what it is *all* occurring in, as the Truth of oneself. That possibility is always here.

[14:58] BARBARA: I am so grateful for these recordings. And I am very grateful to be able to share them with you. Before we go, there’s something I wanted to let you know. Gangaji is

going to be adding a series of online retreats to her calendar. To learn more about those you can just visit the website: gangaji.org. That's gangaji.org. You can also find lots of wonderful free content in the "Browse" section of the website.

All of us here at the Foundation send our love to you and your families. Stay safe, stay well. Thanks for listening. Until next time.