

# 2012-09-16 Blasphemy

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## SPEAKERS

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So, periodically, events happen in the world where it feels kind of odd to come here and give a talk and not somehow address it or talk about it. And so today is one of those days. And I think the events have to do with last blasphemy and response in among some people in Libya and Egypt and other places to this movie or video clips that were made here in united states that seemingly I haven't seen it but seemingly are pretty disparaging of Mohammed.

And so people who see that as blasphemous are now been rioting and people have been killed and you know, it points to many things, one of the things that points to is how regularly religion enters into the public world in such a way that it inflames tensions that exist in our societies in our countries. And this is not the first time that's something that this has happened but it happens in many countries in many different ways that religion can be really a hot button issue for people. One of the virtually sacred aspects of United States culture for our you know, kind of the founding principles has been the idea of religious freedom and religious tolerance. And so to kind of ensure for that there's supposed to be a separation of church and state, so that the state does not impose itself religious values on people. And but then, this it's one thing to have religious freedom, it's another thing for individuals who have that freedom to use it to be intolerant for other people, religious views and, or to take their own views and figure out some way to impose it on people who don't belong to that religion.

One of the great stories of I think of religious freedom or tolerance or acceptance in America is a story from the 1820s of the Baptist minister from someplace like Louisiana or Alabama, who was a senator, US senator. And apparently in the mid-1820s. Before that, the US Postal Service was open seven days of the week. And so the Senate was discussing should they close the postal service on Sunday, to give people a break right and select to do it. It was expensive to run the Postal Service seven days a week and the senator stood up in the Senate and To me, it's kind of significant. He was a Baptist minister. And he said, No, we can't do that. Because Sunday being a Sabbath is a Sabbath for a particular religious group. And we'll be imposing a one one religious groups values onto another. And we can't do that here in this country. So eventually, I guess he lost out. And, and part of that, you know, him being a Baptist isn't there's this the contrast between what it means to be Baptists today, but rather what it is. My understanding is that Baptists were among other Christians. And the time back then, were one of the really sacred aspects of their religious view was conscience, personal conscience, and that it was imperative to leave people alone to have their own to act on their own conscience. That's personal conscious was a sacred thing. And you wouldn't want to somehow limit that impose yourself on it. And even though people might have different religious views and your own, you want it to give them that freedom of conscience to be able to choose and decide for themselves. So I thought that, you know, to me it's a little bit inspiring that kind of history of the United States. And then we also have united states the history of intolerance, lots of it religious intolerance, and, and some of it is not necessarily for

religion, but it's mixed up with ethnic intolerance. And so, you know, for a long time Catholics were discriminated against terribly, and how much it was because they're Catholic, how much because they were Italian, for example, and the northern Europeans who come dominated society, United States, doctors, the immigrant Italians coming in, we're not really up to up to standards or something. And there's been waves of people have come to this country who weren't up to the standards or something. And then this mixed up with their religion and criticism, their religion as part of that phenomena.

So this interplay of how religion plays out in the public sphere is a very interesting one. And here as Buddhists as a Buddhist center, what is what what if any role do we have in the public discourse in the public sphere? Do we simply stay quiet and, and close our eyes and watch our breath and live happily ever after? Or do we? Do we somehow speak up? Do we have a role? More than a role? Do we have a responsibility? Our core corporate entities like churches like IMC, are they in a sense citizens? Apparently, the Supreme Court a couple years ago, right, decided that corporations are citizens, and so the you couldn't limit their campaign contributions. So are we citizens in a sense, as a as an organization as a church that has a certain degree of responsibility For its community that we're in, and how do we step forward into the community? Where would that responsibility be? And how would it be? How would it act? One of the principles that I think we have here at IMC that I like us to have, and which among other Buddhist groups that I've known, been part of, mostly here in the West, is kind of an ideal to be a political so that anybody of any political persuasion, could feel comfortable to come here. And if we start taking too strong political positions, and only say we're gonna, you know, advocate for the libertarians or something, or then or the Green Party or some party and say, you know, and kind of criticize everybody else, pretty soon the Democrats and Republicans are going to feel kind of like, you know, this, these are not my people, or, or I can't, I'm not comfortable here so that you have to be a political in order to be a place where people can use so use this plant use IMC, in the teachings of practice here is an important resource for themselves. So that kind of neutrality is meant to be part of what we offer the wider world. So then we come to this issue of blasphemy, one of the interesting questions would be is, where does Buddhism recognize blasphemy and, you know, as good Buddhist, should we take up arms when something happens? Or is that kind of the style of Buddhism? And so, in that regard, I think one of the, it's very interesting that kind of this issue is addressed. Front and center is very beginning of the Buddhist scriptures. You know, there in a sense, Buddhist scriptures don't have a beginning like the Bible has a beginning. So it's a little bit arbitrary, when you say which, you know where the beginning of Buddhist scriptures are, but in the cat in the, in the, in the, in the cannon that we have the collection of sacred books that we have There's all there's one book, which is always listed first one collection of texts always listed first. And within that collection, there's one text which is first number one in that collection. So it's a big book called The long discourses of the Buddha. So you can see it that's pretty heavy, hefty. And, and there's the first text of course, and that first text maybe is one that qualifies the most, as the very beginning. And it begins by the Buddha with his monastic disciples wandering around India. And, and they come across, or they come to the camp or they spend some time where other renunciant other spiritual seekers of his time were also kind of wandering around. And there is a, a teacher of another sect, and his student, who somehow ended up kind of walking along at the same pace or same way in the same kind of direction as the Buddha and his disciples. And, and so As they kind of wonder kind of more or less on the same path, same road over some days. They, the monks Buddhist monastics they hear what's going on the conversation that this, the other student and teacher having the conversation is that the teacher is disparaging the Buddha and the student is defending the Buddha. So these are non Buddhists but having this you know for many days they're having this kind of argument or conversation. Here it says, the teacher was abusing the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, while his pupil defended them. So, eventually this was came became well known well enough known that the Buddha met with his monastics and address this issue. Now, here, these people are constantly disparaging us and our teachings and, you know, so what do we do? Do

we, you know, a quarter of them And you know, or burn them at the stake or, you know, what should we do about these people?

And so this is what the Buddha said, speaking to his disciples, if anyone should speak in disparagement of me or of the Dhamma, or of the Sangha, you should not be angry, resentful, or upset on that account. If you were to be angry or displeased as such disparagement that would only be a hindrance to you. Without others, disparage me the Dhamma or the Sangha, and you're angry or displeased. Can you recognize whether what they say is right or wrong? So it's a hindrance to be angry, if you're angry. Do you have the clarity to be able to understand what is really true? And so he asks, and so the monastic disciples say no Give the right answer. And then when it continues, if others disparage me, the Dhamma or the Sangha, then you must explain what is incorrect as being incorrect. Saying, that is incorrect. That is false. That is not our way that is not found among us. But if others should speak in praise of me, of the Dhamma or the Sangha, you should not on that account, be pleased, happy or elated. If you were to be pleased, happy or elated at such praise, that would only be a hindrance to you. If others praise me the Dhamma or the Sangha, you should acknowledge the truth of what is true saying that is correct. That is right. That is our way that is found among us. So the you know, the first teaching The Buddha and the first text of the Buddhist canon. That's what it says. It addresses the whole issue of religious relationship between different religious points of view and how do we, what do we do? Someone criticizes you criticizes your religion, your religious teaching your founder of your religion. And so here are the ideas I think with the interpretation is you can be tolerant of it, you don't get angry. And if it's angry, it's to your own detriment. And this is our teacher, I think your point of view of Buddhism, I think a big point of view is that anger is not useful. You anger not necessarily that's, you know, useful for the world, but it's very unusable for yourself. It's a hindrance for yourself, it's suffering for yourself. It creates very unfortunate conditions for you in the present and into the future. And so the idea is to figure out some way in Buddhism to not have anger dominate And, and then to be wise about the anger that you have you do have so you don't cause a damage to yourself or to others. And so part of what we're seeing in the world today is people who get angry. People are angry with each other, and then that anger and hostility and hate, they say things towards each other, which offends their religion and then they're being offended some people then get angry and, and get hostile in return. I don't know if it's a fair principle to sit to, to, to talk about, but it is my impression that the, the bigger the issue of blasphemy is for people, religious blasphemy, the more likely they're going to also be intolerant of other people's religion. It's one thing to be upset if someone disparages your religion. It's another thing to be intolerant of someone else's and And so I think those two seem to go together. It's my been my observation to the greater intolerance with someone else, the more people are upset when their own religion is, is criticized. And it gets quite dramatic. I mean, I've traveled in countries where people have told me individuals for sure, I don't want to generalize that. Basically, I mean, really, that they said that Buddhists should be killed because of their religious views, because their views were so radically different from Central religious views have their own religion, their religion, and it was offensive to them or threatening to them or just so so offensive to them that somebody would have these other kinds of views. And so, you know, Buddhist should be killed. It was you know, what I was told. Some people assume that Buddhists are kind of more peaceful types. And so, you know, that doesn't seem quite fair. But, you know, those kinds of use occur.

And the idea of killing someone for their blasphemy, you know, is as a long tradition in religious circles, and I read that the last time a government in the West killed someone for blasphemy was in England in about 1669 or something in the late 1600s. There was a young man, I think it was about 20 years old. It was executed for his blasphemy against the Christian church. I don't know if it's been the last time someone was, was tried in England for blasphemy, but it was a sacrament. Was Sangharakshita tried for blasphemy Helen, you know? Sangharakshita was tried for blasphemy? You know, I had this

impression that Sangharakshita in 1977 was tried for blasphemy. There's a whole thing about him in England So, or not him or you that he was commenting as someone else being tried in England 1977 the English teacher, Buddhist teacher, governments will try people for blasphemy, and whether they're trying to protect the religious freedom of their people is maybe, you know, so in Indonesia recently there was a thing in the news about the courts in Indonesia, defending Buddhism, because so many thoughts Buddhism was being split with people who are doing kind of blasphemous thing for Buddhists against Buddhism. And that was someone in Indonesia had a bar named Buddha bar and, and just to have a bar with that name was kind of blasphemous. And so they were going to work you know, they had the bar was had to close down that had very recently And so you know, it's most of Indonesia is Muslim, but they are they're protecting, you know, so the government has that view in Sri Lanka as well, which is a Buddhist country, the government has laws against blasphemy. Thailand has very strong laws against blasphemy, any kind of anything real that's really offensive to monks and monastics you can go into jail. I wasn't you know, I went no one thought I was being blasphemous. But when the first time I was a second time I was in Bangkok living at a, at a temple. Back then, the way you bathed in the middle, downtown Bangkok, Bangkok, was to go outside in the courtyard of the monastery, and they had running water fountain or something and you had a little bucket or small kind of bowl that you'd hole and you'd put the ball under the water and then you would fill the bowl with water and you dump it over your head. And so that's how you would shower how you clean in public. And so the question was You know, I didn't know that when I went there. So the question what do you wear when you have a shower like that? And so and so you know wasn't gonna be my underwear and I didn't have a bathing suit and wasn't gonna be naked in monster so what do you do? So, someone in the monastery i don't know if i remember anymore but I think was a Western monk or someone gave me an undershirt of one of the monks and that's what the monks do they had these undershirts that go down down to the ankles almost. And so you you you're naked except for the skirt that you wear. And so with that you dumped water and you clean yourself so I was given this thing to wear and as soon as I was started wearing and taking a shower, some other monk yelled at me for being disrespectful like this is actually say this laws in Thailand against impersonating a monk and this was really a bad thing to do, and you can go to jail for doing this. So I thought I didn't do that again. So there are these are governments make laws, but how much they come from the government and how much they come from the, you know, religious ecclesiastical people I don't know. I grew up in Buddhism, with, you know, my early years of Buddhism in Zen. And there was, you know, there was a wonderfully irreverent, dramatically irreverent, you know, stories that they, they've told themselves. So, you know, like, you know, there's, you know, what do you do when you meet the Buddha? And the answer is, you kill the Buddha, who, and so, you know, I don't think they meant it, literally. But the idea was your idealization of the Buddha kind of projecting onto the Buddha.

Your ideals are just getting in the way of your freedom here and now. And so, please, you know, you should cut that cut that down the, or another question and I think it's one of the cases in a famous collection of Cohen's practice kind of texts with a little Zen people practice with and ponder. And they called the Gateless Gate, Mumonkan. Someone asks, What is Buddha? That's a good question, who's the Buddha? What's the Buddha? And, and probably what was probably one of the most irreverent answers that could have been given. He said, The answer was a shit wiping stick. So they didn't have toilet paper back then. But they had these sticks they would use for the same purpose. And so, you know, that's a you know, so I grew up with those stories coming out of, you know, coming out of Asian Buddhism. So, the idea that we were, we were, you know, we were concerned about blasphemy and all that is not uniting grew up with that idea. So there so I think that, I believe because there's a tremendous emphasis that we put on practice, and monitoring ourselves, watching ourselves and seeing what our reactions are and realizing that things like anger are harmful, and realizing that harming other people is harmful for them, and that they're not wanting to do that out of compassion and



care, that the idea of being intolerant when people are blasphemous against us, and not really in the spirit of what Buddhism is about, as this text was pointed to, the idea is to kind of hold it widely in some big way. But the same time, it's not to not to accept it, and just walk away and be silent because the Buddha says that don't be angry, try to understand what people are saying. And if what they're saying is not accurate, then speak up. And you know, it's tell them what you think is true. What if they don't like it? That's not maybe not your responsibility. You try to explain yourself the best you can. So you're not not being a pushover and just ignoring it. But it's also not being assertive and kind of trying to force yourself on someone. So how do you know what is true then? So if you're supposed to know what's true, how do you know what's true? And there are many levels of that for Buddhists. But I think one of the most interesting ones for many of us in terms of this question of religious intolerance or, or, you know, maybe here is a famous text called the Kalama Sutta. The Buddha taught a group of people who are known as the Kalamas. And they also the Kalamas are also concerned little bit about this issue of people disparaging each other. Because people have been doing this for thousands of years disparaging each other for their religious beliefs. It's not like a new thing. We just figured out how to do so the Buddha come to this the territory of the Kalamas and so they go to the Buddha and they exchange you know, cordial greetings. And then they say to the Buddha, they asked him, there are a lot of ascetics, spiritual seekers, practitioners and Brahmins who come here and they explain and elucidate their doctrines and they disparage debunk and revival and vilify the doctrines of others. But then some other ascetics and Brahmins come here and they to explain it to state their own doctrines, but they also disparaged, debunk revealing vilify the doctrines of others. For us, there's perplexity and doubt as to which of these good aesthetics speaks truth in which speaks falsehood. So that's reasonable. You have a spiritual supermarket, like the modern world, lots and lots of different options, lots of people making claims about what's religiously true and lots of people, some people kind of then criticizing others saying their religion, their religious views are not accurate or not right or false. And in response, the Buddha says first he says, It is fitting is right, it's appropriate for you to be perplexed. It is appropriate for you to have doubt.

Doubt has arisen in you about a perplexing matter. So it's kind of kind of like this, this whole issue of religion and truth and who has the right one, not not right one is perplexing. Maybe once we start entering, entering into religious dialogue, trying to find out the truth, maybe it's almost impossible to find your way out because the basis upon the assumptions people are making their claims are so different from each other. worldviews are so different, it's very hard to sort through it sometimes. And even though you're talking about the same thing. And then he then and then the Buddha says this, this is kind of, for some people, some individuals this what he says next is taken to be one of the best naman where some Western Buddhists taken to be kind of like one of the most important statements that Buddha makes. So much so that no one Western teacher, Yvonne Rand, who's been one of the senior Buddhist teachers here on the West has been through a lot of, of the challenging things that Buddhist communities can be involved in. said, This is what I'm about to reveal to you should be tattooed on the inside of every Buddhist eyelids. I think meaning you know, that this is something that people should really, you know, be reminded of regularly. So, in response to the Kalamas that in there asked me, you know, you know, which of these teachers has the truth? The Buddha does not answer their question. So he doesn't get pulled in to the question of deciding who has As a truth and who doesn't, and this is a strategy that Buddha does repeatedly in these old texts, someone comes to me and asks you know, who has the truth in all these different religious traditions at the time, and he declined to say that, but he always say something what he says is he offers some principles, principles by which people can then you know, maybe find their own way. But here the principle is, are the ideas do not rely on oral tradition. And there were no books back then. So you can almost say don't rely on sacred texts do not rely on oral tradition, by lineage of teaching, or the particular teaching lineage that comes to you by by hearsay. Just because you've heard it by a collection of scriptures, by logical reasoning, by inferential reasoning

by personal reflection, by acceptance of a view after pondering it by the seeming competence of a speaker. And because you think the ascetic is our teacher, so it gives 10 criteria and those 10 among those 10 criterias. But the interesting is that these are often the sources of authority for most religions. What among them is that people, people who aren't involved in religions are often looking for something that's going to be authoritative, they know this is a truth and they stand by it, we can defend it. And if you take our texts that have this and you burn it, then you're in trouble. And so you know, the paradox paradox is that here's a Buddhist I'm quoting from a Buddhist text right? And that says don't go by teachings don't go by text, you know, and, and don't go because you the seeming competence of the speaker. So I don't know what you're thinking but But there is a kind of irony in this right? What's going on here. So that's interesting. So don't go by all these things. You can't go by the source. So what can you go by, in, in, sometimes in popular kind of West, people explain the next part I'm going to read to you as go by your own experience. But that's too naive. Because personal experiences is such a vague term. And it's so vaguely interpreted, and it can be interpreted to mean whatever, you know that. And Buddhism has a sophisticated analysis of what constitutes experience, because it's too easy to a personal experience to be not really personal experience, but to be interpretations of experience. And interpretation is influenced by all kinds of conditions and viewpoints and things. So you have to be very careful not say it's my experience. When it's interpretation so this is what the Buddha says.

But when you know for yourself so he does say when you know for yourself but the following things is what you're supposed to know for yourself, not just you know for yourself or anything at all. And I think one of the for me very trying statements that I've heard in some circles in California is a statement that this is my truth. And as soon as someone says, This is my truth, it's time to stop the conversation. Because there's no there's no there's no possibility for a conversation. I think, my truth What's that mean? And the, when you know for yourself the thought when you know for yourself the following these things are unskillful these things Blame. These things are censured by the wise. These things if undertaken and practice, lead to harm and suffering of these things, you should abandon them. So here are the criteria, primary criteria and what you can experience for yourself ultimately help in Buddhism is what brings you harm. When you undertake and do these things to lead to harm and to suffering, and this is the one half of the really important criteria is in Buddhism where you really learn to rely on ourselves. We learn to use mindfulness to, to understand and read and recognize what it is that we do, that causes us suffer suffering and harm. So, in a sense, the scriptures of Buddhists, so this kind of Buddhist here, the real scriptures is yourself as your heart, your mind, and how you learn to read it yourself. And this is how you read it. Right? Learn to recognize, if I do this, this brings me harm, right I do this this brings me suffering.

So, then the Buddha goes on and he, but also you should go on the following you should you should know for yourself, these things are skillful the things these things are blameless, the these things are praised by the wise these things if undertaken and practice lead to welfare and happiness, then you should engage in them. So, this is the other half. So, this you know, you read this scripture of, you know, in your heart and your mind, see where I can get to learn to recognize and become become wise and become adept, and become nuanced. in recognizing the activity that you do, that either causes suffering or causes happy so if it causes suffering, then the idea is to not engage in it to abandon it. And if it caught if it causes happiness, then you're encouraged to engage in it. To make it clear what he means to this Kalama, he asks them a series of questions. He asks him, what do you think Kalamas when greed, hatred and delusion arise in a person? Is this for his welfare or harm. And the Kalamas being good, wise people, or at least participating in this literary fiction, if it was just the writing, someone made up, say, for his harm. So if someone is acting on greed, hate and delusion, the recognition the Buddhist point of view is that if you're acting on greed, hate and delusion, it harms the person who has those feelings, and in the degree to which we want to become free, free of this inner harm then We

have to let go of that. And then he goes through a number of things and he describes this more in describing things you could do the asks if it's harmful or not. And he's they pay they say harmful. And then he goes on and says, this translation says when non greed, non hatred and non delusion horizon that person, is it for that person's welfare or harm. And the Kalamas say, it's for his for the person's welfare. The word non greed, non hatred and non delusion is an accurate translation of the Pali except that in Pali, the ancient language, the negative of a word like this has a very strong association with a positive quality. So it's not simply the absence, but it actually contains the positive quality. So some translators have translated this non greed as generosity, non hatred as love or loving kindness and non delusion as wisdom. So it could be read. When generosity, love and wisdom arises the person is it for that person's welfare or harm. And they the comma, say it's for the person's welfare. And so it's recognizing particular particular states of mind. And learning to have the ability to recognize these states of mind in yourself, and then be able to see or recognize, are these states of mine harmful or beneficial? That this is the scripture for us, that's becomes the key thing. Look at that. Look at that. And if that's the primary reference through which a person engages in Buddhist practice, then if someone criticizes or disparages your Buddhism, you're poised and ready to recognize how your mind responds. And if it responds with anger, hostility or In some way, you then you, hopefully you're poised to recognize that and recognize that this is not beneficial for you, it's harmful for you. And you have the healthy ability in a healthy way to abandon that to let go of it. If what arises in your mind is generosity, kindness or wisdom, you're poised to recognize that when it occurs, and so when someone then you know criticizes you and that's your response, you know, how to respond, you know, this is a, you know, let me act on generosity, one of the generous ways to act is in the right circumstances is, is not to be critical to make space for someone and say, Oh, that's interesting. Maybe and say, Can you tell me more? And maybe you'll tell me more why you feel that way. While you think that way, but maybe if you if you if I allow you to do that, but you allow me to explain how it is for me and how I see it, and maybe it's there. And so it can be a dialog perhaps, with an open generous heart, not one that closes down or becomes hostile in return. So I can be can be seen as a movement of generosity, or of kindness to the person.

I've seen, by my impression, I don't have a good statistical evidence for this, but it's been my impression that the more hostile a person is, the more useful is for to meet them with, with with, with appropriate kind of kindness. Now if it's kindness is too sweet and saccharin like you're in trouble, but, but there's appropriate way of meeting people with compassion and kindness and, and make space for them. make space for them in a certain way to let them be angry and hateful, so that sometimes something can begin to soften and relax. So the story I've told many times here, I apologize if it's too much, but I think it's interesting Firing story of a woman who came to a retreat with me many years ago, told me the story of how she was a white woman. She went to the south in 1960s, to be part of the Civil Rights protests. And she stood with a group of people protesting for civil rights on a street corner. And a and there was a lot of intolerance and bigotry back then. And so they're they're protesting. And you said a group of you called I think you called them rednecks came and came in a pickup truck truck, jumped out of the pickup truck and started beating them up. And this was a time when the Golden Ages of non violent protesting civil disobedience United States so I don't know if they'd been trained, but they knew not to not to respond with violence, and so they would beat up. The next day, they went out to the state street corner and stood in protest again, and she told me it this next day, the same people came in to pick up drugs jumped out and beat them up again. You know, probably wasn't that bad the beating up, they can come back the next day. But still so and then they went back a third day to stand the same place. The same man jumped out of the pickup truck, had his his fist above her ready to hit her. And their eyes met. And he looked into her eyes. And he said to her, what are you doing? And with that, with that, they had started having a conversation. And that third day, there was no that she wasn't beat up. But she entered into dialogue with this person. I don't know the outcome of the dialogue. But I see that

as a tremendously generous act on the part of the person who got beat up. How many people have the ability to offer that kind of generosity to someone. They completely ordinary human response, certainly defend oneself and defend oneself by fighting back or running away or not doing that again. And they've been great examples of people have changed society or countries by taking a very different approach to being attacked. So I think that the Buddhist approach I hope it's the Buddhist approach to Buddhists being blessed with blessed demise against that, can you say that in English? What blasphemy against is, first and foremost is not they get angry. And then we have to decide what to do after that whether to speak up or participate or just educate people if we can or, you know, or offer them tea or I don't know what it would be. But, but you know, not to meet up with anger. But the same time I think the idea of speaking up and speaking truth, I extend to mean not just roll over and And disappear, but to hold your ground. And you know the great thing about you know, we don't run away. We don't attack, or we look, we look the other person who's attacking us, we look them in the eyes. We don't run away, we don't attack we hold our ground, we looked him in their eyes, and we try to engage, we try to meet them, and see if they're in the meeting of human beings. And this idea of looking at our greed, looking at our generosity, looking at our hearts, hate and looking at the kindness looking at the illusion looking at wisdom. These are the qualities of the heart that we all share. And so our ability to recognize this in ourselves and in a quiet, dedicated way, I hope it's a way of helping us meet the hearts of other people. So there can be heartfelt connection between people as opposed to trying To find meaning, through the complexity of religious doctrines, whether it's Buddhist or something else.

And my wish for Buddhism, is that, that, I don't know maybe it's a little bit arrogant apologize. But my wish for Buddhism is that if Buddhism itself is in a certain kind of way, a religious just like IMC is a political so that Buddhism can kind of be a mediator, in this huge complicated word world of inter inter religious dialogue that we don't take a stand for against other religions. But we offer presence, mindfulness, compassion, neutrality, and certainly about these kinds of issues. Because a lot of these religious issues that people are attached to are not that important for Buddhists. So we don't have to get caught up but we can offer space and be the mediators for it, so that we can all live together more peacefully. So that's my talk. I hope that was okay. Hope I didn't offend any religion thing. So thank you