

2016-06-13 Orlando Hatred Never Ends Hate

Fri, 9/25 3:47PM • 44:20

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, world, society, feel, heart, practice, hatred, imc, open, mindfulness, life, orlando, queer, sit, ideology, important, support, refugee camps, compassion, dharma

SPEAKERS

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And now that to that, that I think it should be a quite a nice day long on Saturday. It's been my wish that here at IMC that at least once a year we do a day long on mindfulness of speaking. It's such a hugely important area of mindfulness in our social life. And it's also probably one of the most difficult areas of being mindful. So to periodically have these kinds of events is thanks very important. And Oren has been exploring, mindful, speaking for many, many years has been teaching about it. And he's a newly minted teacher at through the Spirit rock teacher training, as of Friday. So we might be getting his one of his first teaching things when it's a full blown teacher.

So in being with the killings in Orlando, first thing that comes to mind, first thing that comes to heart is a broken heart. First thing that comes to mind is that the Dharma there's a teaching that the Dharma is found in your hearts, Dharma is not found anywhere else. And that one of the ways that Dharma is found, is by opening the heart, or Dharma is found in the open heart. And it's possible to open the heart so wide, so large, that it includes the whole world, the world, we find the whole world in our hearts, or we find our hearts encompassing the world. And that movement opening the heart makes is a movement to somehow overcome or release, the things that close the heart that constricted, so fear, hatred, anger, despair, discouragement, all these things that people carry with them that often close things down. And the paradox is, the more we open, more sensitive we are, often the more we can feel the impact of the world because the world is, is us, worlds in our heart. And my impression is, the more longer I've practiced them, the more often my heart breaks. And the more off because this world is full of heartbreaking circumstances. And I really don't want these kinds of events that happen anymore, you know, this is we should do, whatever we can do to stop these kinds of events, we should. And when they happen, it feels important to be the witness to it or be open to it or to really take it in and be present for our shared humanity. So that we can live together in this world in a way of love and care and mutual concern for each other's well being. So after dinner this evening, I spent the time looking at now these photographs and the names and the stories that they're published to the victims. And it felt important to take them in and be aware of them and feel them. And men, you know, and it hurt to do that. But it also felt there was a rightness to it. I don't know if that's even the right word to say it, but it seemed appropriate and appropriateness or it felt like of course of course of course. We want to know course we want to share and as I sat there resume thinking about our being with this over the last. Now what is it? Two days it just seems that what happened Orlando is a powerful crosscurrent powerful meeting point of so many ways in which our society gets torn apart. And here again, it's been torn apart even more the fabric of our society gets torn by this kind of thing.

And so members of our human family, people who, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, queer, gender fluid, is a whole range of wonderful people who have been persecuted for so long in this country. And if lived, afraid, I mean, the level of fear that so many people have lived I've lived in for over

these last century and more, is just beginning to, you know, over the last decades to somehow feel safer, and for some of them. But it's kind of easy to forget how much danger there is, and how much animosity there still remains. And so we have this wonderful gay community, which, once again, has had their fabric torn apart. And with them, the rest of us. And then they, the particular night of the shooting, apparently, it was Latino night, at the pulse and then dance club. And so I guess most of the people there were Latino, Latina. And that's another important family of our society. And important members of our wider human family, who were also received tremendous prejudice and persecution and problems here in this country, and, and so the pain of the that community here in this country, and these ripples out, because it isn't just the people there who suffer, but there's a tremendous, you know, stab in the heart for people who've suffered so much, who are carrying with them the trauma of being persecuted and feeling hostility towards them. And some of people have experienced violence. And, you know, it's hard to kind of free oneself of that it's kind of the weight of it. And so to have it happen again, not even to you but to your people, or to people you feel close to, or it just kind of opens up the wounds again. And then it goes out from there. You know, all the people who are families and friends and co workers and neighbors are the people who have been hurt so badly.

And then a whole city. I mean, I imagine that Orlando is in shock, safe my mildly. I was teaching a retreat until yesterday morning. So I woke up to the news. And I knew that there was a woman at the retreat from I thought she was from Orlando. She was just from outside Orlando. And I wondered what it was going to be like for her to go back and Who does she know? And they're gonna kind of showed me the closeness of Orlando's not so far away here. So there's a woman from Orlando there. So I felt the need before the retreat was over to tell her what happened. so that she could somehow be prepared or do what she needed to do and when I told her it didn't seem like she had anything to do with people she knew, but she knew of the place you knew that the dance club called the pulse. She knew about it, and she started crying.

And then this whole event, you know, it's just touches. Another way in which our society is torn. And certainly with the whole conflict, controversy around what to do about guns in the society. Such such a device This creates for us and kind of separates people. So awfully. And then there's, you know, we're in the middle of US election cycle, you know, and touches that and that's creates a lot of fear and divide and seems like adds two levels of animosity and anger and despair in our society. It just goes on and on. And I wonder about the first responders, the people who the police officers are, they had to somehow try to save lives. They were, I think, must have been amazingly brave, to put their lives at risk to try to do something to meet the situation and best they could. And the ambulances, and firefighters had to show up at the scene and try to care for the people who were wounded. And to see all that. You know, it affects people for a lifetime, and their family and goes on and on. So this happens to us these kinds of events, and not easy. And the more open the heart is. Some ways it's harder, it becomes certainly becomes harder to kind of keep the heart open, to keep our heart inclusive, so we're willing, not willing to succumb to hate or anger, or the various forces that increases the divisions again.

But how do we live with that? How do we respond, then I think, since the Dharma is in our own hearts, for those of us who practice, it's the challenge, then the challenge is to find how to stay open to how to continue to open. And they take that on as a big question, what does it mean to be open? How do we do this? How do I not give in to hate? or anger or fear or despair? Or how do I open to my anger and fear and hate? How do I include that? So that doesn't become a divide? I push that away? How do we hold our feelings and emotions and make space for it. And to have a practice that keeps turning towards this, turn towards this? I find it amazing. For me, no small kind of coincidence. That Saturday night, Saturday evening, around 530 or so I went to a for a walk with my friend Paul Heller into the park near the retreat center. And there was I thought I'd show him the frisbee golf course. He never seen

one kind of, you know, local site in Santa Cruz. And we came across a fight between two frisbee players, big strong guys, who were really angry for each other for some reason. And they started fighting, viciously throwing each other on the ground.

What do we do? I didn't know what to do. So we just walk towards them. We didn't run. But they were only about 60 feet away. But we walk towards them. With any idea what to do. We thought, well, when we get close enough, we'll know something.

And but then, just before we got there, they somehow got separated. And they went there went their ways.

So the if the Dharma if the Buddhism the mindfulness practice that we practice here, is supposed to have any relevance for our lives. It has to be relevant for this. And to be relevant for what happens like Orlando, there has to be a willingness to sit with it and be with it and open to it. And to acknowledge it. And I believe that the Dharma practice the what the Buddha presented to the world was a response to this very thing. Because this is not a new thing in our society. been going on for millennia people do this thing. do horrible things. This is, was designed as a way of meeting this and finding a radical alternative to it. And to have the courage and have the willingness and have the sense of purpose, that it's valuable to keep opening the heart and finding a way to somehow hold it all. Not to close down, not to despair not to have hate. I think it's a task of a lifetime. And I have tremendous love are tremendous respect, and appreciation, admiration, admiration for the people who are dedicated, let's keep trying, even though it's hard, let's keep trying to step forward and open. And find a way in this difficult world of ours. Let's not close the doors on people. Let's not push people away. Let's try to find a way. Let's try to work towards the challenge and try to find a way there was a teacher in Cambodia who was evoked this evening. Maha Ghosananda, who was one of the very few Cambodian monks who survived the genocide in Cambodia. The reason he survived he was in studying in Thailand. And Jack Kornfield knew him. He was there we both did with Ahah Chah, and they kind of knew each other there. And Jack said that, at the time, he just seemed like a scholarly monk. But he became one of the month that kind of Mahatma Gandhi of Cambodia. And Jack Kornfield, went back in the 70s, to see him and went with him to the Cambodian refugee refugee camps in Thailand, where people have been Khmer Rouge was still kind of in the refugee camps do evening in Thailand, and they had said, don't have anything to do with this monk don't organize don't, you know, that danger of death. And, but he went, and he was his, his life was threatened to and he went, and they built a platform in the middle of the refugee camps. And he sat on the platform, and the regex tells it 20,000 people came to sit with him, there's 20,000 people who had fled genocide, maybe many of the relatives who died.

And Maha Ghosananda started a chant Buddhist chant toward Buddhist reciting a Buddhist verse. And, apparently, he just recited it over and over again for line verse, over and over again. And as he recited this for four lines, people started crying. And he continued to recite the verse and the verse that he recited was hate is not overcome, by hate. Hate is only overcome by love. This is the ancient truth. hate his own. Hate is not overcome by hate. Hate is only overcome by love. And this is the eternal truth. So I imagine that this is a those of you who've learned about this, this is a difficult time, a heavy time, challenging time. Some of you might not expect it to come to IMC and have this evoke tonight, some of you would have been shocked if it didn't come up, we didn't address it. I had no choice. Myself, I could not. And it's right in their face, in my face. And I think it's important to have places like this where people can come and where it's welcomed or understood, or everyone's welcome, but where it's welcomed, to come with whatever feelings, whatever.

Whatever feelings, whatever emotions, whatever reactions, whatever responses you have, that can come and be held and there's a place to kind of open to it and process it and recognize it and, and do that with a supportive community sitting in this practice of mindfulness. Because it's hard to do it alone. It's hard to kind of find a place where there's where it's okay to come and open to what's here. So here we are.

Two days after the massacre of like, think they now they say 49 people. And some of the people who are wounded the other 50 or so, some of them apparently the ones are pretty bad. They're gonna be, you know, named in some ways for life.

And so Maha Ghosananda evoke love.

How can we have love at the same time as allowing whatever revealing to be there. And I believe that the practice we have here of mindfulness, kindness, compassion, our ways of allowing whatever is we find in our hearts, that's difficult or painful or joyful it might be to allow it to be transformed into something which is beneficial for our world. So that if we are afraid and feel unsafe, we become people who can give the gift of fearlessness to others, so they don't have to be afraid least of us, we can give the gift of safety to others, to help the world become safe. If we feel hopeless, hopefully, we can turn that around and offer some kind of hope to others, that there's a way we can find our way to this world. We can find our way with this stuff. If we feel hate, hopefully that can be transformed into love.

So here we are. So maybe for the next little while. If any of you would like to say something about how it is for you. But I would like to suggest that this is not the time to express your opinions. It's not the time to express blame towards anyone. But really to just say simply how it is for you, which sits in your heart in a simple, direct way. And probably somewhat briefly as many people here. So I see Hannah, move this mic out there.

So I feel like it's easy for me to to criticize ideologies like, like Nazi ideology, for example. But I do feel without fear of retribution in my social circle. But I do feel like I'm not free to criticize ideologies, like, like Islam, and my wife is Muslim, and I don't have any hatred. But like objective criticism of ideology, I'm curious where it is. How do I approach that from Buddhist perspective, when I criticize any ideology, whether it's religious or not? extreme Islamism happened to be one such ideology. Great, thank you. Thank you. So this, what we're doing now is, is mostly just to keep everyone having a chance to say, what's going on. So that's what's going on for you. You have questions and difficult questions about how do we live in the world of different ideologies, religious ideas, and how do we live in harmony? What happens when segments of society insists on tolerance but are intolerant of intolerance in our criticism, and how do we how do we, how do we struggle with this when it seems like it's part of the picture?

Right. Jim

was also on retreat this past weekend when I found out about it. When I got out. I actually didn't feel anything at all. I just felt kind of numb. And I went about my day to day And actually might have been close to the same time about exactly around dinner, I did the same thing I wanted to be more than just sort of just words on on the internet. So I looked through the pictures. And that was very moving. I was at a restaurant, so I didn't feel free to cry, but I actually felt like it.

Yes. Thank you.

So the breath is soft, inside. And I feel swollen, all these parts of the body.

And

I feel my heart full full of

worms

and gratitude, and

wanting to stay open.

And as I was listening, I realized how strange, strange. I've been from my family, I didn't remember my niece lives in Orlando.

And

I want to stay open, to keep welcoming

people that are separate from me, and that I'm separate from them. Thank you.

Thank you for the talk.

As I was sitting, I was kind of reflecting on how I normally on Tuesday nights, I go to the queer Sangha in East Bay meditation center. And how many of the folks there are, obviously, it's queer, and a lot of them are people of color. And I was reflecting on just how scared I am to go tomorrow night. Because I think it's just gonna be so full of sadness, and people who can feel every day the reality of, you know, violence and death and all of that. And that's including a lot of those folks are not, we're not raised Buddhists, you know, we're Christians, Jews, Muslims, and

to not know how to prepare for kind of

how much grief is going to be in the room tomorrow? And

yeah, I can understand your concern. And it's maybe not my place to say something, especially since the this was a time for open forum, but have a lot of respect for a meditation Center and the people who are the custodians of it, the caretakers of it. If I was gay or queer, gender diverse or whatever, it's probably one of the places I would choose to go tomorrow. Knowing would be difficult.

I feel

I feel

incredible sadness, not hatred, not anger, not disbelief. My heart isn't open. It feels pretty heavy. just overwhelming sadness.

Thank you. And sometimes we say that in times like this, that we become sad Buddha's not inappropriate to be sad, to give it honored, honored space, the sadness, we say, now we're now we've become sad Buddhists. So you can pass it back behind you and you're left.

Last night, in

the wake of this tragedy, I had already had plans to meet a friend of mine for Ishtar, the breaking of the fast for Ramadan. And he knew that my brother is gay. And he knew that my brother lived in Florida. And we hadn't seen each other my friend and I we hadn't seen each other for several weeks, several months. And his first greeting to me was is your brother safe? And in the wake of this tragedy and sadness, I was open to that joy, to be able to feel that mix of joy of cool, great. Here's a loving, warm, kind human being in the wake of this tragedy.

Yes, thank you.

Thanks. So I guess what sits with me is I've lived in many countries around the world, and there are so many places where this level of tragedy is almost a weekly event. And something that I struggle with is to both be very present in the desperation and the grief here, but also very conscious of how common This is for so many people and how one expands to include all that grief is sometimes something I spend, yeah, try to try to sit with often.

Yeah. And then when we have things like this happen, or anywhere in the world, everywhere, a part of the, I think also, it's heavy and sad, and all kinds of things happen today. And then sometimes it's hard to remember after a few months or a few years, and there's something about forgetting, which doesn't respect what happened. I think sometimes when the when there is when we take in, the more deep it goes into us. I think the more important it is to be to allow oneself to be changed by this. If we don't allow ourselves to be changed, then, you know, I don't know if it's respectful of it. And so when we are taking the whole world I hope I hope that tragedies all over really changes for the better.

One of the important experiences in my life, that in terms of setting the direction of my life to really try to devote my life to bringing Buddhism to Buddhist practice to the world and eventually brought me here because of that decision I had is Genesis living at the Tassajara Monastery which is a great somewhat isolated in the mountains in California. And you don't get much back then we didn't get much news. You know, it always get news late newspapers and news magazines would come in late and you didn't have much contact with a world for sometimes months at a time. But somehow this time, it was a Time magazine arrived, or was there I found one it was maybe several weeks old. And I opened it and it was full description and photographs of refugee camp that had been bombed in some places in the world. And it just broke my heart open and that was a experiencing that changed me so that now I wanted to really turn my Buddhist practice around and not just before me but before that be something to support with the world. So to allow ourselves to be changed by these things. Each person in their own way I think it's the thing it's easier to handle it's easier to process this easier to hit hold this if we're willing to be changed for the better. And that might take a lot of courage. I apologize for going on and on. I'm not I didn't really meant. It wasn't a direct comment on your I think that

one of the things that kind of

occurred to the mind as I was processing tonight was there's no enemy, right and then I watched the mind go Then hatreds the enemy, right? So then I need to hate hatred. And then there was the meeting of that with Will you that doesn't work either right and the idea of meeting hatred with love, right and,

and that that, that there's this softness in me today and around all of this that is it's like a just a very quiet softness of wanting to love, right wanting to sort of very gently hold what is being placed in my hand.

Thank you

wanting to love him when it's even when it's so hard, I think counts for a lot. We don't have to be perfect. The effort to practice with what is to do our best with it. This goes a long way.

Tonight, I saw an interview with a mother who had a text conversation with her son, as he died in the restroom at the nightclub.

And

I thought how, how kind of her to be willing to share that with with all of us so that we could know something of what happened.

And I felt

such compassion for her.

And I like what you said about allowing this to change us. Because I think that that gives it a real meaning.

And so

I want to use it to to change and heal the corners of separation and hatred anywhere in my life.

Thank you.

So before Sunday morning, I felt every once in a while I feel compelled to, I feel like I have no choice. But to somehow when I sit up in the Dharma seat here is to somehow talk about what's going on in our society that's really big. Because the idea of mindfulness is to be present for what is and learn how to be present and how to be mindful in an effective way. And so sometimes what happens outside of our own personal lives but in the wider world is so big that we have to sit with that the with it. So with this Orlando, I felt like how could I not agree not to address it here. But in the days before, I had the same feeling for something else. Another topic that I also didn't know how to talk about I didn't know how to talk about this today. So it's hard for me just to find my way with it. And that was a talk about rape in our society sexual assault because of what happened at Stanford. And that's also seems like a really big thing in our society. What just happened there and it speaks again to how much violence there is and how there's a huge population of people who suffer sometimes in unseen ways. So you know, it's as I said earlier, in Buddhism Buddhist practice was designed To meet this. And I believe that this practice of mindfulness and compassion and honesty is I have complete faith in it that it's so effective and powerful, that there's no need to despair or feel hopeless. Even though we might feel that way, there's no unnecessary to get stuck there. There's a practice that can hold it, there's a practice, it can move it, practice that can translate transform us. And it might be, might come to the point someday, who knows where how it's gonna evolve in our society and times, we don't know what's going to happen. But maybe someday we'll come. When it's your turn,

to go, sit on top of a platform with 20,000 traumatized people, and be able to sit there and recite from your own heart because you know it. Hate is never overcome by hate. Hate is only overcome by love. This is the ancient teaching, this is the ancient truth. I hope we all can be ready to transform ourselves and to someone who can be of support and help to those in need. And if you're the one in need today, I hope that I hope very much hope that coming here was some support. Some small support perhaps, and that places like IMC and East Bay meditation center, can be refuges and supports for those of us who need need to. But in doing so, it becomes you know, we're also kind of have this long term vision that it is not just for this moment, but it's for the future and future generations that we do this work. And who knows what will be what will be asked to do in the future. And will we be ready when there's a fight in a frisbee field, to walk towards the fight. When you know. So you've come to a Buddhist center of practice, I hope that this practice supports you. And I hope that all of us in our society as a whole is transformed by this for the better. So that we can live in a society where compassion is a common trait, where the desire to support the safety of all beings, a common phenomenon, where profound respect and love and some celebration for every person is a common thing. And for those people in a gay, lesbian, trans sexual, gender diverse world. We would like to have a society where who they are, is not just welcomed, but celebrated, really honored and they have a valuable place. We understand that they're, they're a gift to our society, not just to be accepted. So thank you for coming. And I hope that you take very good care of yourself and, and take care of the people around you. And I hope that we keep practicing. Thank you.