

# The Haters Are Still at It

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**Dan:** I have heard that the people who were trying to slander Ramji online are still at it with their smear campaign. I find this so hard to understand and so shocking. Why do people do this? Is there not something you can do to stop the slander?

**Sundari:** We know it's ongoing, these poor souls won't let up. We heard that they wanted to picket Trout Lake when James was teaching there, which made us giggle. They won't do things like that though; they do not have the guts to make themselves known. It's easy to be brave and talk big in an anonymous crowd. Haters invariably belong to a group, these days people unknown to them on social media, which gives them a forum for their grievances and a feeling of belonging, to be heard and seen. It's all a fantasy of course. The internet is the cesspool of humanity for this kind of thing.

There is no way to stop a hater from hating, because there is no rationale behind it, only destructive and negative emotions. What they want most is your attention, so to ignore them is usually the only viable response. There is nothing anyone can say to them, it's pointless. We never take the hate seriously, it's just a cry for help that nobody can answer. And we never take criticism from people who make cowardly attacks from the safety of anonymity.

If someone has something to say to us, positive or negative, we are happy to listen. But say it to our face. Recently I had a hate attack from the father of a young man whom we once endorsed as a ShiningWorld writer. We had to remove his son because he was using our website to canvas for money to cover his medical bills. But we never closed the door on him, he did that himself. His father, who previously could not heap enough praise on us, now along with his son hates and vilifies us. What to do?

We have a pretty good idea who is behind the online smear campaign, and it has grown, apparently. There is also a "victims of ShiningWorld" hate club started by ex-ShiningWorld people. They meet online to whine and complain endlessly about how hard done by they were by us. We pity them and wish we could help them, but unfortunately, we cannot. You would think that people who have been exposed to the teachings would know better, but that is not the case. Ignorance is indeed hardwired.

As to why haters hate, it's pretty straightforward actually: just fear, ignorance and emotional pain projected outwards because they cannot deal with it internally. While it is easy to call haters sick and diseased, nobody is born a hater. Haters learn to hate as a protective psychological response to threat, real or imagined. We are quick to judge and label, as are the haters, but what if we stop to consider what it must be like to live with that kind of mind, the harm perpetrated making it what it is?

Yet abusive childhoods do not always produce psychologically damaged haters. Though many haters are products of dysfunctional or violent backgrounds, most are products of lives deprived of love, of attention and respect. Many come from "good" homes, born into middle- to upper-class families, and have not experienced any real

lack other than emotional and psychological. They tend to live without coherent moral frameworks, with emotional and social fragmentation added to the inherent unpredictability of life. It is a sure cocktail of ingredients for mental health problems, which is what hate is.

For these hapless souls, generally, the adults, friends and lovers in their lives proved unworthy and let them down badly. Often, from children at home, in school and then out in the world as workers, they always felt invisible. Nobody paid attention to them or took the time to really see them. Indifference and the emotional/psychological neglect of those in our care can be more damaging than physical abuse. It often causes a mind that is like a permanently hovering hurricane about to detonate. At its core is chaos.

The inner rage is so damaging it causes psychological fragility defined by existential panic both personal- and world-related. Nobody has any idea how ill-equipped this kind of person is to deal with their pain, least of all themselves. When you are in so much mental pain you cannot face, it is much easier to cause pain to others than to deal with it yourself. In fact, in some ways, causing pain is a lifesaver because it lets out some of the awful pressure hate causes in such a mind. As the famous American writer James Baldwin so accurately put it:

“I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain.”

Who will you be, when you let the protective armour of hate go?

In its extreme form, hate turns to fanaticism. The pain is so immense it is terrifying. The multifaceted person becomes almost one-dimensional and single-pointed, driven and riven by hate as its primary identity. It must be horrendous to live life like that. Haters deserve our love too, maybe more than anyone does. If we had to take the time to truly listen to a hater before it is too late – if we looked deeply into their eyes – what we would see there is a plea: guide me, love me, see me.

The formation of a hater usually starts in childhood. So many parents do not look into the eyes of their children. They do not see. They are too busy trying to escape their own pain or too immature to truly love or pass on any real guidance to their offspring. Love is paying attention. It does not require perfection. But often these kinds of parents put enormous pressure on their kids to be someone in place of paying attention to who they are. In place of listening to and hearing them, they may hand out platitudes. How is that going to help someone who feels so desperately lonely and alone, lost and terrified, who feels that they don't exist or that their existence is so precarious something could devour it at any moment?

There comes a tipping point in the making of a hater when it is too late; the hater is established as a hater. The hate is so corrosive that it has destroyed the mind, and love cannot redeem it. From then on, what a hater yearns for is order and blunt, black-and-white simplicities. They crave a single, clear and narrow narrative about everything, be it about a person they have picked on or more general causes like race, religion, spirituality, politics, you name it. Life is a war of pure good pitted against pure evil, me/us against them.

They seek out people and groups to belong to just like them, and the more fundamental, rigid and authoritarian the system to counter the perceived evil the better. Haters wrap fundamentalist systems around themselves like a warm, comforting blanket in a blizzard. Without a rigid belief system, they have no

comprehensible sense of self. Ambiguity and ambivalence are terrifying, and they avoid it like the plague. Individuality is too complicated, too obscure and dangerous. They take on the group mind of their ilk.

Wherever haters aim their vitriol, be it at a person or a cause, they seize on an extreme example of anything, blow it out of context, add whatever “facts” they manufacture and make it be the typical case. In this way, they can create “my truth” which translates to *the* truth in their warped minds. There is no logic to it and actual facts do not even enter the equation. The truth only exists as they see it. Haters brook no argument and hide behind their cunning abstract stereotyping, reducing everyone they despise to a category or a slogan. Haters are masters of smug contempt.

Their contempt is a front for a mind skating on such thin ice it could crash through at any moment into the deep dark abyss of despair. Desperately needing role models, they seek out gladiators who will crush everyone in their path, whether political leaders or spokesmen in their private lives. The requirements of the role model are very simple: so long as they seem to never show uncertainty and are as adept at lying, blaming and self-delusion as they are, they will do perfectly. And by proxy, haters enjoy the triumphs of their role models vicariously, as a starving man enjoys a fortuitous meal. They delude themselves into believing they are part of a tribe of superior beings “in the know.”

Haters’ moral systems are uncomplicated and almost always originate from envy. Haters are envious of anyone above them or in some way perceived as elite. Anyone more successful or just plain visible and respected is venal and corrupt in their eyes, whereas everyone in the hater tribe is an oppressed victim of the corruption of the oppressors. The ultimate injustice for haters is that the people they hate the most are recognized, valued, respected. And they are not.

I am not respected, therefore I despise you, who are. This is the molten core from which their indignation and hatred flow unchecked.

Pure unadulterated envy: hate really comes down to that, in a nutshell.

There is a lovely saying in Indian folklore: “People only throw stones at a mango tree that is full of mangos.” Why would anyone attack someone who is not known and loved? No satisfaction there. Hate has corroded all possibility and ability to discriminate and reason long ago. Hatred becomes its own reward; it titillates as the drug of choice, the only thing that can satiate, even if only ever so briefly. And haters need to keep at it because satisfaction is fleeting. Their arousal and enjoyment come from vengeance, from condemnation, from causing pain. Only then is there a brief reprieve from their own pain. Hating usually has sexual overtones, if not the result of sexual abuse as kids, the result of deeply disturbed and distorted identity development.

And yet, somehow, it just doesn’t work. And this maddens the hater even more. And like the addicts they are, it sets up an ever more virulent and desperate attempt to inflict more pain wherever they can, as the pressure of the pain in their own mind grows by the day. But nothing soothes their poor blighted souls for long. What they seek most – to be loved, respected, to be seen and known – requires vulnerability. But the world they have created has destroyed all possibility for this. And without vulnerability, there can be no healing and no relationship. Haters, indignant and superior, are marooned from what they long for most and the only thing that can

save them - someone who will see them, love them and, more than anything, respect them.

The root meaning of the word "respect" is "to look again." We do not love the ones we do truly not look at. Haters have never been seen or loved for who they are, and they want someone to pay for their pain. Vulnerability requires forgiveness, which is impossible for them. It's too big of an ask.

Haters are totally alone. Though they too are the Self, they are the saddest people on this planet. If you come across one or read about one, give them love, even if it's just in your mind, as it will not be possible for them to receive it.

The haters trying to smear us gather steam and feel vindicated as they band together. It gives them a sense of importance, something to distract them from whatever is really the cause of their pain. I truly feel sorry for them.

~ *Om*, Sundari