

What is Hinduism? Part 1

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SPEAKERS

Dr. Arun Brahmabhatt, If You Don't Know, Now You Know, Megan Goodwin, Bonus Ending, Simpsons, A Little Bit Leave It, Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 00:17

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Megan Goodwin 00:41

Yeah, and I will point out that the Wabenaki confederacy actually just launched a new organization that is definitely doing fundraising. So if you are interested in supporting the Native people of Maine, or what's now Maine, anyway, you should look that up! What's up nerds? Hi, hello, I'm Megan Goodwin, a scholar of American religions, race, and gender.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:01

Hi, hello! I'm Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst, a historian of religion, Islam, race and racialization, and South Asia.



Megan Goodwin 01:07

Okay! IRMF! How are you?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:11

I'm doin' alright, alright, alright, Goodwin. How the heck are you?



Megan Goodwin 01:14

I'm well, Paul, thanks for asking. Uhhh-- *laughs* the world is experiencing multiple crises, and each one is worse than the last, but I get to hang out with you! And talk South Asian religions for the second episode in a row! So like... I'm doing pretty okay!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:29

Oh my god, you're right! This IS the second episode in a row that we're talking about South Asian religions, broadly, since last time we chatted about Sikhi. This week, though, we're jumping into the first of two-- count em, two!-- episodes on Hindu traditions.



Megan Goodwin 01:46

Woohoo!! *giggles* I'm so happy for you. I feel like... I just am. You're gonna love this so much, and you, I know, already have so many words that the transcription service will not be able to handle. So thank you, and also sorry in advance to Alex, who is managing the material ways in which white Christian vocabulary and American English is programmed into allegedly neutral AI.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:09

Yeah, yeah. All of that. Which seems like a sneaky commentary, possibly even on the world religions paradigm, but let's not get bogged down just yet.



Megan Goodwin 02:17

giggles Yeah, no, let's not. There's time for that later! *giggles* We do have some rad, rad guests across these two episodes, though. And this time, we are joined by Dr. Arun Brahmbhatt, assistant professor of South Asian religions at St. Lawrence University, whose expertise is on modern religion, Hinduism, and theory. Dr. Brahmbhatt will introduce himself later on, so until then, a toll is a toll, and a roll is a roll, and THIS is a lesson plan!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:41

laughs Let's keep this simple. These like Mel Brooks lesson plans jokes do not-- like, I write them and they make me giggle, so--



Megan Goodwin 02:52

laughs That's all I want, that's all I want.




Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:55

This is just about me. Let's keep this simple, this lesson plan. Today, we're talking about Hindu traditions

for two reasons. First, because Hindus comprise a major population in the world, and yet (at least here in the States), stats are that no one can name just one Hindu holiday.


 Megan Goodwin 03:12

I was thinking about this while I was reading the script, and I was like, "Can I?" And I realized that the first one that came to mind was Diwali, and then I realized that I know Diwali because it's the one that gets tacked on near Christmas.


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:22
Yep.

 Megan Goodwin 03:23


Right? Like that's the one we talk about. And then I was like, also I know about Holi, but that's because college campuses have appropriated that practice. That's all I've got.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:31

Well, that's pretty good, Megan! And even two out of so many is probably still a basic religious literacy problem. And I would venture a guess that because you are a literal religion expert that you knowing two does not fit our statistical norm here in the States.

 Megan Goodwin 03:32

Thank you! *laughs* I'm a freak. I hear you. Anyway, keep going.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:48

cackles Second! So our second reason for doing these two episodes on Hindu traditions is that they're fascinating! A fascinating place to see how religion is what people do! How religion, this category, is related to imperial projects, and um, an issue near and dear to my heart, how religious nationalism functions.


 Megan Goodwin 04:08


Hmm.


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:08


More on all those things in like, two seconds. But! Because we're doing Hindu traditions over two episodes, I'm definitely making this episode a wee bit more about. I don't know. like. history. past tense. some


I'm definitely making this episode a wee bit more about, I don't know, like, history, past tense, some basics, and-- History?! Fiiiiiine. *laughs* -- well yeah, about contemporary issues.


 Megan Goodwin 04:30
Hey!


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:30
And how those alleged basics actually play out. Because like, order and writing. But I want to say that non-historians would maybe do this differently, so for all of your nerds who would and do order your lessons, or your syllabi, or even just how you think about the world differently, that's fine! Your brain is also rad, but mine likes chronology.


 Megan Goodwin 04:52
I mean, I do chronology, it just starts with Partition. It's like, mention that the Raj happened and then keep trekkin'.


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:57
This is so 20th century. Let me say at the start, and I assume, Megan, for like the 100th time on this podcast, just like everything else we've ever said, NOTHING is static here. So I'm going to give everyone this blow by blow. This is like, what we're calling historic and contemporary, but all of this is contested and changing and internally debated.


 Megan Goodwin 05:20
Sure. And then, as we learned from Dr. Jolyon Thomas, we see people in the present, using and reimagining the past in important and interesting and political ways, so, history is present, and the past is the past, and everything's a mess. Anyway! The 101 on today-- *clicks tongue* --the section where we do professor work. It is my time-- it's my time! My time down here to mess YOU up for once! Haha! I shall take the script. I have taught about religion since, uh.... 2007? Seven. I have three degrees in religion or religious studies, I have never taken a class on South Asian religions, broadly or Hinduism specifically. I will-- as I will talk about again in the homework, I took A class at Drew University called, and I quote, "The Problem of World Religions," so... yeah, yeah. I know bubkis about Hinduism. I have two questions that I kind of a little bit already know the answer to, but, you know how we do. One, why is Hinduism on our list of world religions? Why is it important that we know about Hinduism? And two, I keep saying Hinduism, like I kept saying the Punjab. But you are saying Hindu traditions, and I suspect you're right because you know more about this than me, so what gives? This is-- this is about imperialism and colonialism again, isn't it?


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 06:49
Yeah. Yeah, a little bit. I'm glad you asked, Megan.


 M Megan Goodwin 06:53
You're welcome!


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 06:54
So, to answer the first question first, because again, chronology--


 M Megan Goodwin 06:57
Chronology, I see that. *giggles*


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:00
Mmm, we study Hindu traditions because something like 1.4 billion people in the world identify as Hindu, which is about, I don't know, 15 or 16% of the whole frickin world.

 M Megan Goodwin 07:11
Holy crap.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:11
So, if religion is what people do, a whole heck of a lot of people do religion as Hindus! But listen, Goodwin. You already know that I want to tell everyone about imperialism, and real talk: Hindu traditions is one of those places where we can see imperialism so, so clearly, but also like, unclearly? Opaquely? It's got... it's got layers, which you know I love.

 M Megan Goodwin 07:17
Yeah, I guess so!

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:18
laughs Like an onion? Like a parfait. *laughs*

 M Megan Goodwin 07:39
laughs Which I guess brings us to number two. I keep saying Hinduism, but YOU are saying Hindu traditions! How come?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:46

Well listen, that -ism is some telling English language stuff, right? In our episodes this season so far, we've avoided -isms! It would be weird to say African Diasporic Religions as like, African Diasporism, or something? Or, Indigenous... ism?



Megan Goodwin 08:04

laughs Oh, no.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 08:05

We straight up refused to say Sikhism, and we didn't say why, but instead we just said Sikhi.



Megan Goodwin 08:10

Mhm.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 08:10

So, way to pick up on it now.



Megan Goodwin 08:13

Oh!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 08:13

laughs -isms usually indicate that a word that it's attached to is-- like, it's a made up word! There's NO word in any Indic language that originally means "the ideology, the system of practice, or belief, or life that refers to what we would now call a religion." Or, in other words, there's no word that's a cognate for this English language word, Hinduism.



Megan Goodwin 08:16


Wait, so, is Hinduism not a native category?




Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 08:44

Exactly.




 Megan Goodwin 08:45

Ho, ho.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 08:46


And listen! I'm not opposed. I can manage. I use Hinduism. Let's be real! I-I speak American English, and Hinduism is a word in American English and British English, and even Indian English, for that matter! But Hindu traditions, for me, just fits better because it-it gets at the complex, broad sets of practices that we've come to understand and label as Hinduism. There's SO much stuff that gets called Hindu, stuff that in different eras, or different regions, or in different languages, may not have been recognized as Hindu by other folks who call themselves Hindu! So let me say that one more time, in case that wasn't clear. Who gets to be called Hindu is contested internally, which is to say, by Hindus, as well as historically, by various ruling elites who may or may not have been Hindu. So when we-- go ahead.

 Megan Goodwin 09:38

Is this a... is this a place where religion is also about politics and power?

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 09:43


You betcha.

 Megan Goodwin 09:44

Ho, ho!

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 09:45

Because when we say Hinduism, we mean like, a whole truckload of shit, and sometimes it overlaps, and sometimes it's more or less agreed upon by Hindus, and other times there's stuff in there that some Hindus would look at and be like, "Yo, this is not Hindu." So I like saying Hindu traditions because it is inherently plural, where the word Hinduism makes it all seem like homogenous, monolithic, one thing.

 Megan Goodwin 10:11

Okay! Alright, okay. So Hinduism, like all -isms, is NOT a native word, not a native category. To throw it all the way back to J.Z. Smith (and also me three seconds ago because I didn't read closely enough, so I didn't know what we're getting here, but), look, here we are, again. Some of our OG episodes talked about this. So what is/are Hindu traditions then?


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 10:31

Well, to be as basic as possible, Hinduism-- *Secret Word of the Day* --refers to this wide range of beliefs over a very wide range of time. So, depending on who you talk to, the term has been read backward in


over a very wide range of time. So, depending on who you talk to, the term has been read backward in time to the Indus Valley, for nerds that think that matter, which at its height was 2500 before the Common Era to 1900 before the Common Era. So like, a long time ago. Hindu, as a label, developed as part of a composite culture of Hindus and Muslims, right? Like, all of a sudden, when there was religious difference, and also linguistic difference, we are looking around and saying, "Who is what, and why?"

 Megan Goodwin 10:56


Oh wait! Wait, question, though. So does that mean Hindu, as like, uh, an identity evolves in similar ways to like, how Shinto evolves as an identity? Like, in conversation with/not? So like, Shinto was not Buddhism. So is Hindu like not Muslim?

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 11:32


In some places, yes, and in other places, no.

 Megan Goodwin 11:35


Everything's complicated. Okay, keep going.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 11:38


Hinduism itself, like I just said, is an English word, right?

 Megan Goodwin 11:42

Mhm.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 11:42

But it's also popularized and developed during English/British colonial intervention in South Asia.

 Megan Goodwin 11:51

Mmm.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 11:52

And as we've said before, "Hindu" as this label in British India was really, extremely politically important as part of white Christian supremacist ordering of society. The British needed desperately to know who was "Hindu," who wasn't, and that labeling took on some gnarly effects, like, quotas for the workforce, imaginations of who was "native" to India and who was "foreign" (but please note that the Brits themselves never saw themselves as foreign! They're just like, omnipresent...? They're residents everywhere).



Megan Goodwin 12:26

Sure, sure, sure. Make the world England etc, etc. Wait, I'm sorry, though. Can we, um... quotas for the workforce? Like, you hire X number of Hindus?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 12:36

Yeah.



Megan Goodwin 12:37

Really?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 12:38

Yeah.



Megan Goodwin 12:39

Okay. O-Okay. *blows raspberry*



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 12:43

We're just gonna leave that there. I will-- I can assign readings.



Megan Goodwin 12:46

Okay. Man, dudes with pens. Jesus!! Anyway.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 12:51

But Hindu was also word that today, like, like we've said before, I think, collapses some things that we might see as "secular" and "religious" into one big category. AND, to make matters more complicated, loads of scholars have shown that "Hindu" and "Hindu tradition" includes things from other religions, which sometimes confuses the meager minds of Americans.



Megan Goodwin 13:14

Yeah, my tiny little mind is blown already, and I feel like we're just getting started. Anyway. Okay, alright, alright. Mhm.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 13:19

Sorry, there's more. Cause I'm saying a lot of stuff about how Hindu is a newish term, how it's a label that works and gets popular in different eras, but notice, Megan, I'm not saying that we should throw out that word. "Hindu," "Hindu traditions," even "Hinduism," maybe newer terms-- even concocted terms!-- they're certainly newer than the religions in the worldview and systems that those words describe--



Megan Goodwin 13:46

Mhm.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 13:46

-- but people who identify as Hindu use them, so we do too. Period, the end.



Megan Goodwin 13:52

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, that makes sense. As always, we call people what they call themselves, what they want to be called! And Hindu isn't the only or maybe even the first religion whose self-identification name was, at one point, a label. That's true for Jews and Judaism, it's true for Zoroastrianism, it's true for-- it's true for a lot of -isms. So like, we can both know that it is a label that someone else (and by someone else, I usually mean white European dudes) put on these groups and someone else popularized, but also, we will trust people to call themselves what they want to be called. And we will call them what they want to be called. Yeah. Okay, but for real, though, I know you can get weird about language all day.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 14:37

laughs Me?!



Megan Goodwin 14:40

Lies. Fully lies. I saw all the Sanskrit, like, annotations in the Sikhi episode in the margins. You are a liar. Anyway! I cannot. I cannot, I need you to stop now. So okay, what do we actually want our listeners to know, historically, since you heart history, you love history so much, old things the best. Fine. And the next episode is about contemporary things. Hooray! That's for me. I like now. What... what history?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 15:10

Listen. Point of order.



Megan Goodwin 15:12

Mhm.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 15:13

The not-English words in the margins of the Sikhi episode were Punjabi, not Sanskrit.



Megan Goodwin 15:19

Shit, I'm sorry.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 15:19

Number two, alright-- If I have to choose, I want us to think about some of the key ideas, and maybe some key terms, for what we might see across historical periods for Hindu traditions. And so, I guess what I'm going to do is show you how that those were used, in radically different ways, by all sorts of Hindus and, uh, others, just to complicate matters further. So disclaimer to our dear nerds, this is a killjoy's introduction, not all things across time, and place, and space. I'm cherry picking here based on, frankly, what I have learned teaches well in classrooms.



Megan Goodwin 15:21

laughs Okay, good to know. Please continue.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 15:57

Alright, so, helpful facts about Hindu traditions include these words, often: first up, Sanskrit. So, Sanskrit is a word that you're going to hear from me a lot, and that you'll hear a lot when you venture into learning about Hindu traditions. For me, I see it a lot, frankly, on the interwebs when Hindutva trolls (right wing Hindu nationalists) accuse me of not knowing it (and spoilers, nerds, I do. It's a lot rustier now than I would like, but I do, thank you very much). Sanskrit is one of the oldest languages in the world, and we can call it both a sacred language and a textual language. So if it helps, at Catholic school, it works similarly to Latin in a lot of cases. Yes, religious things, very important religious things happen in that language. It's used sacramentally, or ritualistically, but... religious things do not happen exclusively in that language, nor is that language exclusively used for religion. So, Sanskrit texts include other genres of writing, not just religious writing. All of that said, Sanskrit is vitally important for SOME kinds of Hinduism, particularly and especially those that are rooted in both high class, so monetary status, and caste, which we're going to talk about in a minute. AND, especially anyone who's looking for religion to be textual.



Megan Goodwin 17:19

Okay. I want to point out, first and foremost, that I said, "Let's stop talking about language," and you agreed, and then what did you do?



Ilyse Moraenstein Fuerst 17:26



This is a key term. That's different.

M

Megan Goodwin 17:29

cackles Lies! You're a sneaky, sneaky liar! But okay. I hear you saying that Sanskrit is important to certain types of Hindu histories and practices, and I know that Sanskrit becomes a marker for like, quote unquote, "authenticity" and "legitimacy" for Hinduism and Hindus, and that's a whole... that often corresponds to like, higher class and castes, has oomph for folks trying to climb within terribly rigid social systems. When you say that Sanskrit is important for those who seek to be textual, what does that mean, though? Uh, errr, don't all religions have texts? Wink, wink, BARF?!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:08

Yeah, I mean, you hear me hedging a little because it's easy coming from white, small-p protestant America to act like all religions have texts. And we've talked about this before.

M

Megan Goodwin 18:17

We have!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:18

Hindu traditions, specifically, have MANY texts, and some of those are Sanskritic, but not all, and some Hindu traditions don't rock texts at all. Like, it's just not part of it. Lots of people who practice Hinduism never learn Sanskrit for all sorts of reasons, including, quite frankly, casteist ones, where high casted folks barred lower casted folks from even HEARING Sanskrit, let alone becoming literate in it. Nowadays, learning Sanskrit claiming Sanskrit as holy, is unbelievably politicized, like, in ways that you can't possibly imagine, that we're going to get to a little bit later and definitely in the next episode.

M

Megan Goodwin 18:57

Mmm.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:58

So Goodwin, listen. The too long, didn't listen to all of this language stuff, which I know you hate, is that when we study religion, we're often looking for texts because white Christian imperialism. And when we study Hindu traditions, that has meant looking for texts originally written in Sanskrit, like the Vedas, or epics, like the Ramayana, or the Mahabharata, or the Bhagavad Gita, which has its own history, but those are ALSO tied to imperialism.

M

Megan Goodwin 19:30

Okay. Alright. I am gonna call, I believe you call it a time out? on terms because you are bordering on off sides.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 19:43

You're trying so hard.



Megan Goodwin 19:44

laughs Okay. Can we, can we back up? What... what are we talking about if we're talking about caste?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 19:51

Okay. Caste is complicated. *Secret Word of the Day* At its most simplistic, textbook definition, though, caste is a system of social stratification that relies on marriage and procreation, plus the passing down or passing on of status, and usually refers to notions of ritual, or religious, or bodily purity. Caste is also usually loosely tied, if not outright tied, to vocation.



Megan Goodwin 20:23

And that was simple. That's, that's you making things simple.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 20:27

It's as simple as I can make it!



Megan Goodwin 20:29


Okay.





Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 20:29


Caste is really pretty complicated. There's subtleties that, in my experience, Westerners are so, so bad at comprehending, in part because like, we are, so, um, stuck in Protestant capitalisms, right? But I think for us, it's important to understand that social stratification in this system-- in the caste system-- is about every aspect of social life: your inclusion and exclusion in everything from marriage, to school, to rituals, to where you can go shop for food, to where you can eat, to whether you have access to water, to jobs-- everything, historically, has been tied to caste. In India, and I'm talking about the contemporary nation state, it is a fundamental and oppressive system that structures society. So, I've heard some scholars say that the cognate system in the US is race. I am... I am uncomfortable with that, frankly. I think it's a lot more complicated than that, and I think it underestimates how complicated caste is and how complicated race is. But, if that helps our listeners, particularly those of us that are in the west and are unfamiliar, I think where caste and race makes some sense as, like, comparatives is that caste touches everything,


even though it is like race, a social construct, and is technically illegal in the nation state of India today, much in the same way that we Americans like to think that Jim Crow is dead. But we and our listeners know that racism and casteism are alive and well, with literally deadly consequences.


 Megan Goodwin 21:58
Yeah.


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 22:00
The other thing about caste I think is important to mention--


 Megan Goodwin 22:04
Imperialism.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 22:04
Yeah, it's imperialism.

 Megan Goodwin 22:06
Aha, I knew it!

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 22:07
It's imperialism. And when the Brits show up, and they look for folks to talk to, like, Megan, you keep talking about those guys with pens, right?

 Megan Goodwin 22:13
I'm obsessed with the guys with pens!

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 22:14
Listen, they're snobs! They're these like, roughly landed elite, often college educated, froofy snobs. So when they're talking to folks, and figuring out how to rule, they're not talking to the servant classes and castes! No fucking way! They want to talk to the literate elites. They want the straight dope from the people that they can trust-- folks who are MORE like them than the other unwashed masses. So most of these guys that these guys with pens talk to were high caste and often high class, though monetary wealth and caste status aren't always the same. So when the British start learning about Hindus, when they start producing all this information about Hindus, when they invent the word "Hinduism," they're learning it

from the folks at the tippy tippy tippy top of the caste system, typically Brahmins, or maybe Kshatriyas, this warrior caste, ruling caste. So Megan, how might you think, how about you imagine that learning about Hinduism from the tippy top of the caste system affects us as we talk about world religions broadly or Hinduism specifically?

M

Megan Goodwin 23:22

Hmm. Okay, well, first, I want to point out that Brits have some nerve showing up anywhere else in the world and telling other people they're unwashed. Just saying. B.) I feel like if you're only talking to the super wealthy, super privileged, super elites, then the shit that got written down and shipped back to like, Europe and the States is going to be... like, the stuff that winds up in textbooks is going to be from the most elite, most literate, most text-based, most Sanskrit invested folks, that our understanding of Hinduism is basically going to be super biased toward all of that. Yeah?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 24:00

Yeah. You're right. You're right! Of course you're right. Those guys with pens were obsessed with the other guys with pens. So lots and lots of Hindu practices are not that. They're not Sanskritic. They're not tied to specific texts. There's dance as worship, they're singing and chanting, sometimes Sanskrit mantras, but-but sometimes not. There's vernacular language prayers, meaning like, spoken languages, popular languages. There's practices, rituals, all of that gets ignored, or lumped, into this category of "folk" religion, compared to the high, textual, like, authentic religion of the literate Brahmins, these highest caste of folks.

M

Megan Goodwin 24:45

Huh. Huh. Okay, so, I guess you said you were going to talk more about diversity in Hindu tradition. Sorry, I'm just like, I'm flashing back to our conversation about indigenous religions and you talking about, like, tribal religions in India, and it's interesting that that stuff gets coded as like, tribal...? And not Hindu. This is all-- hm. Religion is messy. Anyway. Okay. Alright. You said you were going to talk about diversity in Hinduism. So what does that look like? How... what does that... Yeah, how is Hinduism/Hindu traditions, how are they diverse in practice?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 25:24

So let's ground us in an example. You know I can't handle too much theory talk. So let's use, let's use the epic, The Ramayana, as an example. So, the Ramayana is a long tale about Rama, who's an avatar-- *Secret Word of the Day* -- (not the internet kind, like the Sanskrit word for God living on Earth in a New Form kind) of Vishnu. So Rama is an incarnation of Vishnu, one of the big, big deities. The Ramayana is his story, Rama's story. It's all about him and his wife, or consort, Sita, who is, in the story, kidnapped by Ravana, the Demon King, and all of the exploits they're in. It's a very long and very popular text that shows up in a ton of places across Asia, with lots of variation across whole ass religions, and it is absolutely crucial for contemporary alt-right Hindu nationalists and extremists.

M

Megan Goodwin 26:25

Hm. You had me at demon king! And then again at nationalists and extremists.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:33

I know, said Han Solo.



Megan Goodwin 26:35

snickers You solo'd me! This is my extremely Princess Leia voice. I love you.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:42

laughs



Megan Goodwin 26:43

Heart hands is not good for radio, but that's what I'm doing.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:46

Okay, okay. So loving us aside, Rama, or Ram, becomes this really important, venerated king and deity. In the text, in the Ramayana, he's complicated.! A lot of the themes of it center around "Is Rama acting correctly? Is he doing his dharma,-- *Secret Word of the Day* -- his duty, his obligation as a son, as a king, as a husband, as a brother-- it's a deep text! I loooove reading it! And let me say that like any text, there is many ways to read it, as there are people doing the reading. So some folks read Ram as a hero. Others read him as an anti-woman, misogynistic villain of sorts. Others read him as a flawed human, and still, others read him as a perfect like, man-god. When I teach a whole class on the Ramayana, we read many translations from different genders, castes, historical periods, and languages, all to show that this one text really should be put in scare quotes, because it's not really just one text, first of all, and it's never ever, never ever, never EVER had one stable interpretation.



Megan Goodwin 27:56

Huh. Right, because, if religion is what people do, what people have done with the story is where all the good stuff is, right? Like that's, that's the juice!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:06

Absoutely.



Megan Goodwin 28:07

I think it's rather surprisina that you said that there was variations across reliacions because. WTF. this is

the Hinduism episode, and I thought the Ramayana? I thought that was a Hindu text, though!!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:28

chuckles



Megan Goodwin 28:28

Is that-- is it-- what... are you...? I feel like next you're going to tell me that like religions are not discrete entities, and that makes concepts like hybridity essentially bullshit. Say it ain't so!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:40

Sorry about it, girl.



Megan Goodwin 28:42

Goddamn.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:42

Ramayana tales show up in Southeast Asian Buddhist communities, as cultural heritage, as puppet theater, as major epic-- Yeah, everyone loves puppets. It shows up there, though, right? And there's major epic tale affiliated with their identities. So like, if you go to Thailand, you will find Ramayana puppet practices and, like, dress up plays that have a Buddhist and Thai twist.



Megan Goodwin 28:49

everybody loves puppets!!! Sorry.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 29:11

The Ramayana also has a history, especially in the 15th to 17th century, for those of you keeping score at home, of being really important to Muslims! We have all of this evidence of Muslims, especially Sufi Muslims in South Asia, making the case for the Ramayana, among other epic tales, as Muslim allegory, Muslim tale, Muslim book, but the adjective there is Muslim, NOT Hindu. So like, from the jump, nerds, I want you to hear that this particular Hindu text about an incarnation of a Hindu deity is so utterly important today to Hindus. It's not-- it's not always been, and to this day, is not exclusively Hindu. AND, within Hindu communities, there's also variation! How Rama is portrayed in the text, of COURSE because oral traditions, for one, but like I also said, because location, perspective, context-- all of this matters for interpretation of texts.



Megan Goodwin 29:11

What! I just... I don't know anything about Hinduism. Okay. Um, how-- help me think about this. Are you suggesting that because the Ramayana-- no--



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 30:22

You're doing fine.



Megan Goodwin 30:23

blows raspberry I took Latin. Ramayana, like lots of other sets of religious texts and myths, was originally memorized, and performed, and passed from generation to generation... that that matters?? Because like, duh, of course, like, we know that when people pass things on when times change, when regions change, the stories change! It's a big old game of telephone.... out in this big old crazy world of ours!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 30:49

Definitely. And that's not to say that texts didn't exist. I want to be clear, because imperial white dopes have tried to make not-white people appear stupid and illiterate. The Ramayana itself is dated to like 500 before the Common Era to 100 of the Common Era. So it's, it's old! Like, older than Christianity old. But it isn't plentiful, those texts. It's not like you can roll up to a library in the Christian year zero and be like, "Um, excuse me, I'd like the standardized Ramayana, please?"



Megan Goodwin 30:58

giggles



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 31:22

Manuscripts were expensive. They were hard to obtain. They weren't made for the masses, and of course, masses weren't literate. Not by a longshot. But, folks, masses, did hear these texts perform. They were memorized, they show up in popular practice in... in time.



Megan Goodwin 31:42

Okay, okay. So there is a text, it's highly sophisticated and precise, it just happened to come like 2500 to 2000 years ago-- give or take-- and it gets popular, like, WAY later than that.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 31:56

Yes.



Megan Goodwin 31:56

So what I'm hearing-- okay, okay. So what I'm hearing, then, is that we should expect variety rather than than hear it as, like, some sort of flaw, like it's a fake Ramayana, because it changed over time.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 32:08

You're so smart. That's exactly right.



Megan Goodwin 32:09

Thanks! Good job, me!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 32:11

And you know what, I think this is the perfect place to let our guest expert, Dr. Arun Brahmbhatt, take a turn.



Dr. Arun Brahmbhatt 32:18


My name is Arun Brahmbhatt, and I'm an expert on Hindu traditions, and more generally, religion in colonial India. More specifically, I focus on the use of the ancient language of Sanskrit in what we considered the modern period, and its connections with more modern languages like Gujarati and Hindi. I care that folks, students, scholars, and my neighbors way up here in the North Country of New York State, in the foothills of the Adirondacks, know what I study because understanding the present requires us to think about the historical processes that got us here, whether that's in relation to Hindu traditions, or any other religious traditions. One thing that I wish people knew about Hindu traditions is that, to fully appreciate the diversity of Hindu traditions, we have to traverse a lot of time and space. Now, most people have a sense of how old the roots of Hindu traditions are, and certainly most introductory courses will cover things like Vedic ritual, but a lot of courses focus on Hinduism in what is now the nation state of India. This is, of course, important, but what maps of world religions don't show is how there are Hindus all over the world. Some of this is a more recent phenomenon. For example, my parents immigrated to the United States in the 1970s. But, there have been generations of Hindus living in places like the Caribbean, South and East Africa, all of this brought on by colonial labor practices. Even before that, Hindu traditions traveled to Southeast Asia. So we're really dealing with an extraordinary amount of time and space. Time and space certainly account for a lot of the internal variation within Hindu traditions, but there are other variations as well. On the first day of class, I do an introductory exercise with my students where I ask them to come up with a list of five terms that come to mind when they think of Hinduism. When I compare their lists, there are a lot of similarities. They often point to gods and goddesses, image worship, karma, reincarnation, the usual suspects. I then point out that, for pretty much every term they bring up, we can find Hindus who have differing perspectives on that term. A lot like defining religion, there is no one consensus on defining Hinduism. There's diversity even if you take something that a lot of Hindus agree on. For example, there is the widespread idea that there is a soul or a self, the atma. And this atma continues to exist after death, and it is reborn in another body This process continues and continues and it actually isn't as fun as it may seem. It's, in fact, suffering. It's called samsara. The ultimate goal is to break free of this cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. This is called moksha. But even for an idea like that, Hindus have different thoughts on the process of attaining moksha, and also on what moksha looks like. To further

complicate things, I should also point out that this idea of samsara is not just unique to Hindu traditions. It's also something that's shared with Buddhist and Jain traditions as well. But let's go back to space-based, regional variations, and let's take two fall time festivals, one celebrated in western India in Maharashtra, and the other in the east, in Bengal. Both of these have similarities. People create temporary images of deities, and they place them in temporary displays. The images are then taken in processions through the streets, and finally, they're immersed in the sea. In Maharashtra, this is Ganesh Chaturthi, a festival celebrating the god, Ganesh, the remover of obstacles who has an elephant head. In Bengal, this is Durga Puja, honoring the goddess, Durga, and particularly, her slaying of the buffalo demon, Mahishasura. Two very similar festivals, but with completely different regional inflections. These two festivals are also useful in illustrating how Hindu traditions can change over time. The current shape of these festivals can be traced back to the colonial period. In Bengal, the celebration was used as a way for wealthy landowners to mark their social standing, particularly in connection with British officials. In the mid 18th century, the British had asserted dominance in the region. Now, by the early 20th century, Durga Puja became a much more public celebration, and one that became connected with anti-colonial nationalism. There's a similar story in Maharashtra. At the end of the 19th century, the British had banned large, public gatherings because they were worried about anti-colonial political activity. However, they did allow for religious gatherings. Ganesh Chaturthi became a way for people to come together in celebration of Ganesh, but also to drum up solidarity against the British. These celebrations today aren't regularly associated with their colonial beginnings, but they do demonstrate the transformative effects of colonialism. Now, this brings us to the world religions model. Now, in one sense, Hinduism has fared well, if your barometer for success in the world religions model is whether or not a religion is included, and certainly all textbooks of world religions have a chapter on Hinduism, and all world religions courses will have a section on Hinduism. But the important question is, how is Hinduism described? And how is it envisioned in these models? Especially in the earliest articulations of the world religions model, Hinduism was constructed as a world religion, as an other to Christianity, and this was a result of the colonial encounter. Now, there are two further points that are worth noting with respect to this. Many folks like to distinguish between two types of colonial scholarship. The first is one that really sees Hindu traditions as heathen traditions-- all sorts of worries about polytheism, and idolatry, and a disdain for religious literatures. There's another type of colonial scholarship that romanticizes Hindu traditions. These were Orientalist scholars who saw a lot of value in ancient Sanskrit texts. But, both of these views represent an idea that Hindu traditions are something wholly other than Christian traditions. And really, that India is something wholly other than Europe. In other words, both of these views are problematic. Now, the second point that I want to bring up about the world religions model is that the colonial period was definitely transformative, and scholars have pointed out that many Hindu self-conceptions were a direct response to colonial critique and inquiry. But even though the colonial period was transformative, it is one of many periods of the development of Hindu practices, texts, traditions. To understand modern Hindu traditions, we have to start much earlier than the colonial period. As an example, there's been a lot of scholarly debate about whether Hinduism is even one singular religion, particularly given the diversity I talked about earlier. Some suggest that Hinduism was constructed as a religion in the colonial period. Now, this doesn't mean that the British came and invented individual Hindu beliefs and practices, but rather that thinking of the components of Hindu traditions as belonging to one unified religion happened in the colonial period. There's been a lot of pushback to this model, with scholars arguing that the development of a Hindu identity happens much earlier than the colonial period. And really, to say that Hinduism isn't a religion says a lot about one's own definitions of religion in the first place. So yes, the colonial period is important, but we can't focus on the colonial period to the exclusion of other periods. My own work on the use of Sanskrit in the Swaminarayan tradition in colonial western India draws on these understandings, and I'm really interested in issues of continuity and innovation. Even though it's said that Sanskrit is a dead language, people in the modern period use it in dynamic ways. Now, a lot of my work is, perhaps, a bit too technical for what the listeners of Keeping It 101 are here for, but let me give you a small example. When I was a grad student learning Sanskrit, I was translating a piece of contemporary Sanskrit composition. I came across a word, and I couldn't quite figure out the translation or how it fit in. The word was *durdarshana*, which literally means seeing far, but it just

didn't make sense. Finally, my Sanskrit teacher revealed to me that this was a term invented by modern authors to refer to the television. Here I was thinking it was some sort of classical trope, but no: television; seeing far. Now, this is a really small example, and not at all indicative of the really intense theological debates in Sanskrit that I study, but it does show a creative engagement with classical registers. And it just drives home for me how all sorts of religious agents make sense of their present by drawing upon the past. And, so, it makes sense for us to figure out what exactly these connections with the past look like.

 Megan Goodwin 42:13

I really appreciate Dr. Brahmbhatt's take on modernity, and Hindu traditions, and why they matter to the world religions paradigm. I just feel like... I'm so grateful for our nerds and them helping us think about, well, these things that I'm certainly not an expert in. It's just, it's nice to hear from other people who aren't us. Thanks, friends! And now, it's time to move on to... A Little Bit Leave It!

 A Little Bit Leave It 42:41

A Little Bit Leave It

 Megan Goodwin 42:42

It makes me so happy every time-- where we're letting you know what WE think the most important, or most interesting, or most challenging part of this topic is. It is a little bit to leave you with. Ugh. Yeah, you know, I-I think my little bit leave it is just how little my three degrees in religion taught me about Hindu traditions. Like, I'm reflecting and I'm realizing, like, everything I know about Hinduism came from like, the day in that one class in grad school, or stuff that I've picked up truly from, like, through osmosis from you, orrrr, the crap-- I shouldn't call it crap-- the, uh, problematic and limited stuff that is available in world religions textbooks, or things that I am picking up in and around like conversations about space between Hinduism and Hindu nationalism from journalists like Kalpana Jain. Yeah. So, I know very little, which is a little bit sad, because this seems like an important space to think about how religion and culture and language and literature and Empire and ritual and text all shape and inform each other. And I a little bit feel like I have a lot more learning to do about Hindu traditions, is what.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 43:55

laughs Alright. Well, we can all stand to learn more. And, I think I've talked way too much this episode.


 Megan Goodwin 44:03

What?! No, surely not.


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 44:05


So for me, I care that our nerds know-- I want to leave them with the idea that Hindu traditions... you should know about them! They're big, they're messy, they aren't monolithic, and far too many folks out here in the world are doing violence over who gets to count as Hindu. It's important. And it's more


important than, like, some elementary school teacher telling you that Indian history equals Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, right? Like that, that shit sucks. So, there's a reason I left that stuff out, and there's a reason I put in the politics and the textuality and the history. I'll leave it at that. It's important. Go learn some stuff. Period.


 Megan Goodwin 44:45
Hm.


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 44:47
But if you don't know, now you know! It's the segment where we get one factoid each.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 44:51
If You Don't Know, Now You Know

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 44:53
Megan, I know you know things about Hindu traditions even though I did most of the chatting this time, and you keep saying you don't know stuff. But wha-- what kind of fun fact do you got for our nerds? Come on, give me something.

 Megan Goodwin 45:05
Okay, okay. I can I can do this. Okay. So, I mentioned in our conversation about Shinto that I am particularly fond of stories about mischievous or trickster gods, which means I am fond, in this case, of the Hindu deity, Hanuman, who's a monkey god, who gets into some excellent divine shenanigans.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 45:21
So many shenanigans.

 Megan Goodwin 45:23
So good! Which means I was super excited to-- truly the point of derailing our post-training dinner-- when Hanuman popped up in Black Panther! So M'Baku, who is the leader of the Jabari, invokes Hanuman before he fights T'Challa, and this is like a one line thing, and everybody else who I went to see the movie with was like, "Just keep on trekkin'" and I was like, "Wait, shut it down. What, uh, what, uh-- does this mean that, like... what do-- does this mean that, like, the Jabari were trading with, uh, South Asia? Does this mean... like, how did Hanuman get to... like, brain derailed. I missed the whole fight, and then we went out for dinner afterward and nobody wanted to talk to me about it. So I had to like... it's such a problem. But this is, this is my brain! I was like, "Wait, no, I have to think about this right now and at length," so like,

tweeting at Richard Newton about what's going on and did they-- they said Hanuman, right? And then what does this tell us about, like, ancient trade routes? And-- anyway, I was supposed to be having dinner with non-religion nerd friends, but none of them cared about this, like, one sentence mention of Hanuman, a Hindu monkey god! And I love them, but they were wrong for having a thought about it. And anyway, uh, Hanuman, he shows up in the most unexpected places! The end.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 46:42

He does. I could talk for days about Hanuman, truly, especially because a lot of my work at one point in my career was right near a Hanuman temple. And, I have to be honest-- so like, at these Hanuman temples, there's veneration of monkeys, so people like, leave food out and water-- and I, I HATE monkeys. I hate them. I hate them so fucking much. They're obnoxious, and whenever I would do fieldwork, like monkey-- I just, I don't know. I think-- I think monkeys hate me. I had monkeys, like, steal my pens. I've had a monkey like steal my sandwich. I once had a monkey, like, grab my hair and I turned around like he was a person like, "Don't touch my curls!" Literally to, like, a motherfucking monkey. I HATE monkeys.



Megan Goodwin 47:24

wheezing I'm sorry-- *inaudible*



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 47:27

Megan, get it together.



Megan Goodwin 47:29

You literally had the Chang [on TV's Community] moment of "monkey stole my pen."



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 47:33

This is my actual story.



Megan Goodwin 47:35

"Monkey stole my pen!" I need this illustrated, I need it to be a graphic novel... *laughing*



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 47:40

No, there were like, there were witnesses, it is like a long standing joke. Like, there's a text thread I have with friends from India who are like, um... who are like, "Oh my god, remember when that legit happened to you?" And I was like, "No, I remember, I had to like leave my post for the day because I was out of pens! A monkey motherfucking stole my pen!" I-- whatever. And like, none of that is Hanuman-- okay, everybody, that's NOT about Hanuman, that's just about the monkeys--



Megan Goodwin 48:03

laughing It's just monkeys, monkeys, monkeys!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 48:05

-- in and around the Hanuman temple. So in my mind, while I love Hanuman, I do not... I do not always love his ritual spaces because I just-- monkeys hate me! I think they're out to get me. *laughs* Well, alright, I've derailed us, but how about I give an actual fun fact?



Megan Goodwin 48:16

cackles Yeah okay, alright, alright.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 48:24

So like, one of the facts my students squeal about-- and I teach a Hinduism class once a year, and then every other year or so I teach this, like, Ramayana seminar. But my students love this idea that popular practices-- so like, visiting deities in temples--



Megan Goodwin 48:39

Mhm.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 48:39


--there's a lot of them that, um, don't exist in texts at all. Like, the duties are often in some text, but even if they are, it's not the way that they necessarily show up in temples, or in popular home shrines; that like the "common knowledge" about deities might not be textual-- or like, it kind of is but it kind of isn't? So for example, when you go to a temple and you perform puja, this ritual ceremony where you offer something to a deity and they offer something back, you usually do it in a way that's specific to that deity. So some deities really like coconut, others really like ghee, or clarified butter, some like flowers, and often, those practices-- these, like, really important rituals-- you can't, like, cite chapter and verse as to why. It's not like you could pull up the Ramayana and be like, "Yeah, yeah yeah. Hanuman's in this book, this is where he shows up, and on page 481, it says this." It doesn't! It's just-- I'm putting that in quotes-- it's "just" tradition, it's "just" custom, or it's kind of from a poem but it's elaborated, or it's a song, or it's regional. I want you to hear how people-- like, what people do isn't necessarily tied to text, even if you see these characters, these deities, show up in text. So I love the variations. I think it matters that it shows up in these ways, that, like, what people do is not about "just" a book.




Megan Goodwin 50:03

I love that.

I If You Don't Know, Now You Know 50:04
*If You Don't Know, Now You Know"

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 50:07
We blew it with my monkeys. God, I hate monkeys SO much.

M Megan Goodwin 50:12
cackles I'm so happy about the monkey story. A monkey stole your pen!


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 50:16
It's about my sandwich. It's the sandwich. I was so tired one day, I like roll out this one archive, and I sat down and I like, unwrapped my sad sandwich that I had made-- it was, like, a cucumber sandwich-- and I was like, I put it next to me, which was, like, probably mistake number one, and I like zoned out, and I like heard the paper moving, like the wax paper I'd wrapped it in, and I was like, "No, don't take my sand--" and it was a monkey! And I was like, "Well now, I'm not eating that." This is.. I'm just... I'm out.

M Megan Goodwin 50:43
laughs I can't eat that after you touched it with your monkey fingers.


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 50:47
Truly! I was just like, I... lost. I lost to a monkey. It was just... really bad. Anyways.


M Megan Goodwin 50:53
laughs Yeah, a couple of times, it sounds like. Anyway. Don't pack up yet, nerds! You've got homework.


S Simpsons 50:57
Homework

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 50:59
Alright. Our guest Dr. Brahmbhatt has a chapter on the BAPS Swaminarayan communities, a modern Hindu movement that's super important worldwide. They have the largest temples outside of the nation state of India. So I'm going to link you up to that. Wendy Doniger has this book called "On Hinduism," which caused


a stir a number of years ago with the Hindutva trolls, but to be honest, I think it's pretty solid, and very excessively written, and some of those chapters would work brilliantly in book clubs or introductory level classes. If you're interested in pop culture, Yashica Dutt thing for the Atlantic, called "Indian Matchmaking," that Netflix show, exposes the easy acceptance of cast, and it's all about how the Netflix series "Indian Matchmaking" is actually like really, really embedded in the caste system and arranged marriages, and is super colorist and casteist and problematic. It's really great. If you are watching that show, it has spoilers, but also, it's from 2020 so you should be more on top of your social media.

 Megan Goodwin 52:20
laughs

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 52:22
Um, I talked the Ramayana this episode, and I'm going to again next time. I'm going to-- I'm going to pull out that nationalism piece in our next episode, so if you're interested in the text itself, for an abridged version, I like the Narayan. It's an oldie but a goodie. And if you want the whole shebang, so like, really trying to translate the WHOLE thing, I can't lie. I'm still partial to the William Buck translation, which is very literary and engaging and has all those like-- for those of you who know, you know-- it has all those goofy 70s hippie dippie drawings in them, so like, I think those are neat. For the scholars among us, Paula Richman's edited volumes, both "Many Ramayanas" and "Questioning Ramayanas" have stood the test of time, frankly. They are rich with multiplicity. So, they're edited volumes, which means every chapter has a different topic, and a different author, and I'll link to both of these because they're literally just about how plural this tradition is, and it focuses on lived practices. And because I said that magic thing that always gets me hate on the internet, which is Muslim Ramayanas, I'm going to link to some some stuff about those, particularly Indonesia's Ramayana tradition, and a book by my colleague at UVM, John Seyller, which is all about the Freer Ramayana, which is a Muslim-sponsored, Persian language Ramayana, and it's gorgeous. So, I'll link to all of that stuff. I'm going to stop here (but hey, nerds, don't tell Megan-- I'm 100% going to stash extra stuff in the show notes. So if you want more, I'll put it there. Don't tell her!).

 Megan Goodwin 53:52
laughs How will I ever know?

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 53:53
snickers

 Megan Goodwin 53:55
Alright. I, as this episode has made abundantly clear, do not know from Hinduism. And what I do know is almost entirely about contemporary stuff. Literally my first and probably, sadly, most formative encounter with Hinduism was Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom. Like, they never say Hinduism, but it was the first time I heard about the Thuggee, it is, I think, honestly, the first time I realized that, like, Brits had been in India and that maybe colonialism existed?? Anyway, yeah. Temple of Doom, not actually a source

on Hinduism, unless you want to look at like, very bad, horrible, violent stereotypes of Hindus. *sighs* But okay, my-my "Problem of World Religions" class-- which is a literal class I took a Drew that I really hope they call something else now-- had me read Diana Eck's Darsan, which made me rethink how it's possible to be in relationship to and with the divine, and, um, yeah! That was, that was a good book from what I remember--



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 54:58

It's a great book.



Megan Goodwin 54:58

-- from, 15 years ago. Anyway. Um, I also really dig Shivam Bhatt's storytelling threads about Hindu gods on Twitter because I am, as I think we have established, just trash for a good story. So his handle is elektrotal? It's e-l-e-k-t-r-o-t-a-l, and I will link to his thread about Hanuman in Black Panther in the show notes to get you started.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 55:22

Okay, wow! That's a lot.



Megan Goodwin 55:24

Yeah. *giggles*



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 55:24

Big thanks to those of you writing reviews on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon, and Google. It really helps! So, our nerds of the week-- *drumroll* are: JACK83642, PKeatra, and Mimi62916. Thanks, nerds!



Megan Goodwin 55:44

Yay, nerds! Join us next time for more HISTORY OF THE WORLDS, RELIGIONS, PART 1, when we chat more about Hindu traditions and are helped out by rad guests Drs. Shreena Gandhi and Dheepa Sundaram.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 55:54

Shout out to our research assistant Alex Castellano, whose transcription work makes this pod accessible and therefore awesome. If you need more religion nerderie, you know where to find us-- it's Twitter! The answer's Twitter.



Megan Goodwin 56:04

Yeah. You can find Megan (that's me!) on Twitter @mpgPhD, and Ilyse @ProfIRMF, or the show @keepingit_101. Find the website at keepingit101.com. Peep the insta if you want! Drop us a rating or review in your podcatcher of choice and possibly attain nerd glory. And with that...



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 56:27

Peace out, nerds!



Megan Goodwin 56:28

Do your homework. It's on the syllabus!



Bonus Ending 56:55

Bambholle, by Laxmii