

You Still Don't Know about Islam, Part 1

Fri, 1/28 9:24PM 1:00:21

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

islam, muslims, sunni, muslim, mosque, religion, practices, ali, petersen, rashid, people, world, ashura, rituals, tradition, community, kristian, differences, important, china

SPEAKERS

Dr. Hussein Rashid, Dr. Kristian Petersen, 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

This is Keeping It 101, a killjoy's introduction to religion podcast. In 2021 and 2022, our work is made possible through a Public Humanities Fellowship from the University of Vermont's Humanities Center. We're grateful to live, teach, and record on the current, ancestral, and unceded lands of the Abenaki, Wabenaki, and Aucocisco peoples. And as always, you can find material ways to support indigenous communities on our website.



Megan Goodwin 00:41

What is up, nerds? Hi, hello. I'm Megan Goodwin, a scholar of American religions, race, and gender!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 00:47

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



Megan Goodwin 00:54

IRMF. We're back!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 00:55

We really are. I know it's been a few weeks-- we've been book-writing, and resting, and grant-applying, and yelling into various abysses.



Megan Goodwin 01:02

chuckles



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:03

Is... is it still season four? Are we still doing a HISTORY OF THE WORLD (RELIGIONS) PART 1 bit?



Megan Goodwin 01:10

Hell yeah, we are! Of course we are! We both know we could spend the rest of our podcasting careers, such as they are, just on world religions, and its problems, and then the wide variety of actual religiona, so like.... y-yeah, we're gonna do a couple more episodes on this.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:25

Amazing. And good. You know that I would make Mel Brooks jokes, and Mel Brooks adjacent jokes, forever.



Megan Goodwin 01:32

I know, friend. I know.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:34

But! I gather that we're not on the mic to let me make 30-50 year old jokes.



Megan Goodwin 01:39

I mean... Not just. Not just.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:41

I assume we're back recording so that we can actually do the work of History of the World (Religions) Part 1, now with more religiony goodness.



Megan Goodwin 01:49

Yes, please! That is the sort of thing that we are doing. So... shall we?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 01:54

We certainly shall, Megan, because it's a beautiful day! Because today-- today, Megan-- today...



Megan Goodwin 02:01

Yeah?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:01

We do the first of two consecutive episodes on... Islam.



Megan Goodwin 02:05

What?!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:06

Which means for once I can use the easy parts of my expertise and not draw on all the other stuff I'm forced to know because teaching religion in the US to Americans like me means being able to talk broadly, all the time, and specifically,



Megan Goodwin 02:17

But the good part about that is that you're not bitter at all. Like, at all.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:20

No! No. Today, I'm a proper expert, and I couldn't be happier.



Megan Goodwin 02:24

I mean, like, I'm happy for you! I am also in awe of the amount of shade you can throw, given your tiny person. Alright! You came to play, and I love that about you. I am here for all of you even, perhaps especially, for the shadiest parts. That is neither here nor there. But please, tell me, Dr. Expert, what's your agenda today, since you are.. *laughs* clearly revved up? Let's go!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 02:53

I'm so glad you asked, Megan. This is HISTORY OF THE WORLD (RELIGIONS) PART 1, and we've got two Islam episodes back to back. We've talked about Islam before, though.



Megan Goodwin 03:02

Yeah, we sure have! Let's see. Episode 307: You Don't Know About Islam, and episode 308, where we talked jinns with Dr. Ali Olomi (that's a personal fave), and... oh yeah! Like, way back in season one, episode 5, episode 105, where we talked about how hajj!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:18

You love a callback so much.



Megan Goodwin 03:20

You know it!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:21

So, yes. We've done that, and obviously, I talk about Islam and Muslims regularly, like, across all these episodes. That's, like, my whole thing.



Megan Goodwin 03:29

Yeah, it is. So it makes sense that you talk about it so much!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 03:34

So what does that mean for us today? What are we actually doing? Well, what I want us to do across these two episodes is talk about variety in Islamic practice. We have two-- count em, two!-- guests today to help us do just that.



Megan Goodwin 03:49

That is awesome. It is so exciting. And, both of these experts are near and dear to us, so it's an honor that they took the time out to help us. Dr. Hussein Rashid is a scholar of Muslims in American popular culture, and founder of islamicate, LLC, a consultancy focusing on religious literacy and cultural competency (and lord knows we need more of that). That sounded sarcastic, but no, I mean it. We really-- we need lots, lots more of that. So much more. Thank you, Dr. Rashid, for helping! And then Dr. Kristian Petersen is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Old Dominion University. He specializes in two main areas of research: the development of Islam in China, and Muslims in cinema.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:33

I've learned so much from both of these scholars over the years and I can honestly say that I miss our coffees, and our teas, and our hangouts, especially at AAR and conferences...

M

Megan Goodwin 04:42

sighs Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 04:43

So, I and our listeners will have to settle for their brilliance on the mic. And again-- all we're doing is working through varieties in Islamic practice because in the HISTORY OF THE WORLD (RELIGIONS), Islam is so maligned, or so collapsed, or so oversimplified, that the very least we can do is try to work against that. Islam is, like most religions, messy as all get out.

M

Megan Goodwin 05:08

Yeahhhhh. Yeah. If that's all we're doing, we can totally do that in 45 minutes. Alright! Anyway. How much blood can she have left?! She's almost-- the lesson plan! *laughs* I'm gonna miss the Mel Brooks jokes when they're gone. Anyway! Repetition is great pedagogy, so we're gonna say it again. Today, we are talking about Islam for two reasons. First, because like we've been telling you all for all of... all of the episodes, truly, religion is imperial. Religion is part of how we have structured the contemporary world, and it's particularly about the dominance of certain glosses. And the gloss that Islam has gotten is particularly nasty in the world religions paradigm. And second, we don't think you can call yourself religiously literate without actually knowing how Islam is practiced in communities, or that Islam looks different in different regions, and times, and cultures.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 06:11

Absolutely. Which brings us to our thesis! We've said this before and in different ways, but 20 plus years, after 9/11, 43 years after the Iranian Revolution, and a century and a half after the Queen of England assumed power over the majority of the world's Muslims, Islam isn't what you think it is, nor what those historic moments from the western perspective would have you believe. Precisely because what you have learned is tainted by these EuroAmerican events. Islam STILL isn't what you think it is, even if you think you know better, because few places in the US (even Muslim spaces, if I'm honest) have the capacity, willingness, or mission to represent all sorts of Islamic practices as part of one big whole, at the same time, across history, at all moments.

M

Megan Goodwin 07:00

Yeah. That's friggin huge. That's... that's so much. I think I want to underline just, like, a thing that you're saying, which is that there are a lot of truth claims to, like, "authentic" or "proper" religion in every religion that we talk about so, Islam is not outside that, they're not different. But! Since we're at a moment of increased Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hostility, truly,

literally the world over, what most of us know, whether we're Muslims or not, is shaped, in some way, by this outside narrative of hate. And we can come back to that, but it's important to note it, like, right from the jump. So, that leaves us at... the 101 on today-- *clicks tongue* -- the section where we do professor work.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:43

Well then, okay. Goodwin, I'm not even going to play at asking a rhetorical question. I'm just going to tell you what we're doing.



Megan Goodwin 07:48

Amazing. I love it when you take charge. Lay on, Macduff.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 07:53

So, there is WAY too much to cover, and I KNOW I literally teach many semester long courses on just Islam. So, we're not going to get to all that in 45 minutes, nor are we going to get to that in 45 minutes times two. But! What we can do, and what we're going to do today, is foreground Sunni and Shi'i differences, but come back to Shi'i practices, and I'll explain why. And then, I'm going to talk a little bit about Sufism, when we can.



Megan Goodwin 08:19

Okay, cool. Pause already. You just said three words I recognize, but do our nerds know them? Who's a Sunni? Who's a Shi'i? What's a Sufism?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 08:27

We'll talk about all three of these in more depth later, but let me give you some quickie definitions. *Secret Word of the Day* So, these are groups of Muslim people who are all part of what we would call a global Muslim community. So, for some Muslims, they use the word umar or ummah for that, but that's also heavily debated, because who gets to count as a member of the community is often determined by people within the community. So, there are loads of Sunni Muslims who might say that Shi'i Muslims are outside of that community. And there are loads of Shi'i Muslims who might say that Medina Muslims are outside of that global Muslim community. Sunni Muslims represent one large, big umbrella group, about 80% of the Muslim population. Shi'a Islam represents about 15-20% of that, and I know that if we take 80 and 20, we're at 100, but there are more groups than just those two. There are minority religious movements within Islam, and Sufism is a worldview, a way of approaching a religious tradition, that in English sometimes gets associated with mysticism, which I have an itchy relationship with because mysticism is rooted in, again, a Christian understanding of the universe. So, we're going to get more into that... definitely in the next episode, but, does that work for you?



Megan Goodwin 09:49

It works great for me. Thank you so much.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 09:51

Awesome. Let me get back to the frickin lesson plan. Next time, we're going to talk about Islam, particularly in black communities, in the US AND in other places around the world, like Senegal and... I forget what other countries we put in that episode, but other places in western and eastern Africa. We're centering race and that episode, in a way, on purpose, so stay tuned. Our guests across these three-- these two episodes talk about variety, and plurality, and specifics, so we're going to try to keep up. In fact, Megan, I think I'd like to buck our pattern so far in this season, because I think this is actually a great place to let Dr. Rashid speak. We usually hold our experts to the end of the episode or toward the bottom of the take, but I think he's actually... I think he's gonna do a better job than us. His comments are big picture, and that's where we're at in this episode. So if you'll allow me to change it up...?



Megan Goodwin 10:46

As you wish!



Dr. Hussein Rashid 10:51

My name is Hussein Rashid, and I am an expert on Muslims in US popular culture. I have an interest in teaching about religious studies and in Shi'ism. I am a freelance academic, currently at the New School in New York City, on land that is traditionally stewarded by the Lenape people. I care that my students know what I study because for me, it's about ways of seeing the world. I'm an expert on Islam, but I want them to understand diversity. I want them to understand how we've historically dealt with diversity, and that this is not a new phenomenon. I think the one thing-- the one thing that I wish people knew about the study of Islam is that it's not about this Islamophobic or Orientalist vision of text, but it's also about people, and how people live, and the art, the architecture-- whether it's Rumi, whether it's the Taj Mahal, whether it's hip hop-- that all of these are also part of the study of Islam, and that you've got all these wonderful voices coming in there. Within Islam, people tend to think of a Sunni/Shi'i divide, sometimes they might think of Sufism, which is all well and good, but within that, do we understand the internal diversity of Sunnism? Whether it's the legal schools of Sunnism, or the different theological divisions within Shi'ism, whether it's the Ash'ari, or Ismaili, or non-Imami traditions, like the Zaidi. And then within Sufism, the hundreds and thousands of different types of tariqas, or orders, that exist. And then beyond that, do we understand the regional differences? So, that a South Asian Shi'a Ismaili Muslim is different than a central Asian Shi'a Ismaili Muslim, both living in the 21st century. I think that when I try to talk about Islam, lived rituals, life rituals, are an important way to talk about this, whether it's birth rituals, marriage rituals, funerary rituals-- you know, these are important milestones. You can see a lot of diversity and regional and school-- regional diversity and school of thought diversity within these rituals. But for me, it's the holidays. You know, I'm in New York City and we spent a lot of time asking for the two Eids off-- Eid al-Fitr, which commemorates the end of Ramadan, and Eid al-Adha, which is the sacrifice of Abraham. But of course, this is a very Sunni, not-normative

way of looking at things because, of course, the Shi'as have Eid al-Ghadir, which recognizes the day that Prophet Muhammad said that his son-in-law and cousin, Ali is his successor. This is a very important day on the Shi'i calendar. You also have Mawlid al-Nabi, the birthday of the Prophet, or Yawm-e Ali the birthday of Imam Ali, or the celebration of Fatima's birth, the beloved daughter of Prophet Muhammad. So, how do you put in all these other holidays? And even having this discussion is a way to talk about diversity within Muslim traditions. We get this emphasis on Sunni understandings of Islam, I think, for a long historical record. And part of this comes out of the world religions paradigm which, of course, tries to compare everything to Protestant Christianity. So, of course, by lack of having a perceived lack, I should say, of a central religious authority, Sunni Islam became good Protestant Christianity, and Shi'i Islam, by having a nominal, or, I should say-- or Shi'i Islam, having an allegiance to a centralized authority figure in the Imam, gets classified with the Papists and the Catholics, and so they're the bad Christians, or the bad Muslims. And we see this today even with the way we talk about Iran, right? We hate Iran because they're Shi'a. And it's this anti-Catholic, anti-Papist American worldview that's coming into play. And so what happens is, is that Sunni Islam becomes treated as normative. And we see that-- and a lot of my colleagues don't understand the ways it necessarily appears, but when we talk about the five pillar approach to Islam, or the study of Islam, that is a very Sunni normative position. Right? This is a very normative Sunni position. Shi'i thought can include seven pillars, up to seven pillars. It separates out actions from beliefs, which multiplies the number of prerequisites. And so I think that this is a very important understanding in the ways in which we've treated and historically structured the study of Islam as though it is a study of Christianity. And again, I don't want to say it's normative, I don't... I think a great many of our colleagues are speaking against this. but I think trying to trace the intellectual background allows us to reimagine what Islamic studies could be like. With my colleagues Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand, and Beverley McGuire, I'm co-editing a volume that will be out on Bloomsbury Religious Studies in 2022, called "Teaching Critical Religious Studies," which looks at the ways in which various of our colleagues are taking this historical trajectory in different religious traditions and trying to figure out how to teach around and against, and thus reinvigorating, the study of so-called world religions and moving it out of the world religions paradigm. I think for me, there are so many instances in which I can look at or talk about how the study of Islam and Sunni Islam has weakened the study of Islam generally, and its repercussions in the world. When you look at different cities looking for the Eid holidays, they're normalizing-- they're taking a theological position and normalizing a particular understanding of Islam, and not allowing space for the internal diversity of what it means to be Muslim. And of course, internally, Muslim communities then are being ignorant of their own traditions. And when you're ignorant of your own internal diversity, that feeds into more narrow and more stifling understandings of ways to be Muslim. We see this in the foreign policy sphere when it comes to dealing with the Iran Nuclear Deal, where a lot of Shi'iphobia, again, coming out of anti-Catholic thought, is limiting our ability to engage properly with foreign relations, with Iran. So, it's not just generic Islamophobia, but it's very specifically Shi'iphobia that is coming into play. And, of course, this is becoming self-referential and self-reinforcing as we say "Well, the Shi'a are a threat to us, we have to study the good Muslims," and so we study Sunni Islam and that becomes normative, and then you say "Okay, then the Wahhabis are good Muslims," that creates all sorts of other problems because they're the super Sunnis... which I have problems with because I'm not sure they fit in the Sunni/Shi'i dichotomy either. So, I think we've got this very micro-level on school holidays, we've got this macro foreign policy level, but we also then limit the ways in which we can approach the study of Islam and don't take seriously how practice is an important part of the Muslim tradition, whether it comes through arts and culture, whether it comes through gender discourses, whether it comes through ideas and questions of

sexuality, which have a much longer history than the 21st century or the 20th century. But again, if we're not dealing with that internal diversity, we're not dealing with questions that have existed within the tradition for centuries.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:47

Okay. I will NEVER tire of Hussein describing his Harvard training as making him have the confidence of a mediocre white man. I just... the 2022-est of energy.



Megan Goodwin 18:57

laughs Fluff.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 18:58

Amazing. But what I actually hear him saying is that if we don't think about Islam as plural, we miss the forest for the trees.



Megan Goodwin 19:05

Yes. Yes. I am really interested in where Dr. Rashid said that in New York, where he's based, he can see the variety of Muslim celebrations and practices if he walks, like, five blocks. I hear him saying that Muslim Americans bring their cultural, linguistic, ethnic, racialized, gendered selves to their Islam. And in New York City, where many neighborhoods are frankly segregated, or at least reflected dominant, ethnic, or religio-racial group, you can see this in real life, in real time, on the ground. The way that Bangladeshis dressed for Eid celebrations will look different than how Somalis dress, which is different from Indonesians, and STILL different from African Americans, and Iraqis, and Egyptians. Best, fancy, party clothes might seem like a silly thing to pick up on, but it's one of the most obvious to notice, and frankly, really fun, and beautiful. And you know that we care about how sartorial choices reflect bigger things, like gender and ethnicity, region of origin, age, class AND, yes, you guessed it-- religion.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 20:05

A billion percent. What I want to highlight for our listeners is that Dr. Rashid also talked about how the mapping of Christianity-- and specifically, the Catholic versus Protestant rift-- onto Islam only serves to do Islam a major disservice.



Megan Goodwin 20:23

Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 20:24



Ilyse Morgenstern Fuerst 20:24

What he said specifically was that we ought to be suspicious when folks attribute all differences between-- his examples-- Saudi Arabia and Iran onto Sunnism and Shi'ism respectively. He knows better than most that those theological differences are present, surely, but what he asked of us was to reconsider how profound those differences are.



Megan Goodwin 20:45

Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstern Fuerst 20:46

And I gotta be honest, I fully agree with him. I've been in spaces-- like, official, government, State Department spaces-- where usually white dudes, who are NOT Muslim, are trying to make the differences between Sunni and Shi'a as if Sunni Muslims are "real" Muslims, and Shi'i Muslims are nothing but their mortal enemy, like cats and dogs or... something.



Megan Goodwin 21:09

Yeah. Something other than, like, complex groups of millions and, indeed, billions of people with their own robust and complicated histories. So yeah! Let's... you know how I love a definition. So, like, let's define some terms. IRMF! Please tell us the short-- not all class length, not 40 citations-- the SHORT difference between Sunni and Shi'i Muslims. And, can you start with why sometimes I hear people say Shi'i and sometimes Shi'a, and then sometimes (most people I know don't see this, but I'm gonna say it out loud even though it makes me cringe) Shi'ite?



Ilyse Morgenstern Fuerst 21:43

Yes. And this is an English language issue. So. Put on your grammar hats, everybody. Famously, hilarious fun for a podcast! So-- Shi'a is a collective noun. Those Muslims, they are Shi'a. The group that considers itself followers of 'Ali (and we're gonna get to him in a second): they are the Shi'a. Shi'i is either an adjective (He is Shi'i Muslim, this is Shi'i ritual), or a singular noun. I'm Shi'i. Shi'ite should make you cringe because it is literally just a bullshit anglicization. That -ite ending, like Canannite or whatever would be the dead giveaway. I wouldn't use that term anymore, but you do see it really frequently, especially in flagship newspapers that claim their style is more important. So, way back in episode 105, I told you that the New York Times refuses to spell qur'an, Q-U-R-'-A-N, and only spells it K-O-R-A-N, like it is the year of someone's Lord 1871. Diddo Shi'ite. So when the New York Times reports on Shi'ism, they only use Shi'ites because that is their stylebook from, again, I assume, 1871. Cause it ain't cute.



Megan Goodwin 23:06

I guess, at least, they're not still saying Muhammadans? Question mark?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 23:09

Sure. I mean... I'm not giving white people bonus points for that nonsense.



Megan Goodwin 23:14

Yeah. That's fair! That's fair.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 23:15

So that's Shi'a, Shi'i, Shi'ite. Sunni is easier because it is all of the things. It's a collective noun, a singular noun, and an adjective all at once when we use it in English. And all of this grammar stuff-- which I know, again, like, not fun-- but all of it is actually about how we translate predominantly Arabic and Persian into English, on top of how Arabic and Persian speakers like, apart from all sorts of other Muslim Islamic languages and Muslim speakers, would describe themselves. But Arabic and Persian tend to be the two languages that get the most shrift here.



Megan Goodwin 23:51

Yeah. That... okay. That makes sense. I also don't know what you're talking about because grammar being explained out loud is fun. Who doesn't love that?! That's a good time! Also, I am truly at the top of the episode exhausted about the fact that we can't even define the words until we talk about how people use them. And no wonder you're always grumping at Americanists. Anyway, can you come back to Sunni and Shi'a now that we have a sense of what we're supposed to say when?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 24:23

Okay, fine. I'll do my best.



Megan Goodwin 24:25

Thank you.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 24:26

So, these are the names for branches of Islam-- and notice I am not saying "sect." But if you really, like, violently pushed me, I guess I would move... if you didn't want branches, I guess I could say the word denomination, which still isn't quite right. But these are Muslim groups that have developed historically around different theological interpretations, though not just about, like, theology for theology sake. They also developed in conversation with-- you guessed it!-- empires, and kingdoms, and regions. Some of these theological differences are profound, some have become profound, like, you know, over time, and some, frankly, are just differences that sometimes matter and sometimes just don't matter.



Megan Goodwin 25:15

Yeah, yeah. Okay. So, I am going to cheat because I never let my students do this in my class. We, like, really try not to use Christian terms to understand non-Christian religions, but, if you were most familiar with Christianity, this is kind of, sort of, kind of but not really, and Dr. Rashid's gonna be mad at us, but sort of like Catholics and Protestants, but also like Baptists, and Methodists, and Congregationalists, and Unitarians, or if we're gonna make it Jewish, like, kind of like Conservative, or Reform, or Hasidic...?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 25:47

Yeah. And look, again, I agree with Hussein that we don't want to map, like, Catholics versus Protestants in a battle royale to the death onto Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, and I also agree with you that using Christian terminology to describe someone, like non-Christian religions, is just... it's just a bad idea. It's a Pandora's box of bananas. But I think that what I find helpful when I talk to public audiences outside of my classroom, like this podcast audience, is that we understand that all of those words can mean Christian. And we understand that, like, Conservative, Reform, Hasidic, whatever, for Jews, means Jews. And I want people to hear that Sunni, and Shi'i, and Sufi (and later we'll get into some more specific terminologies), it means Muslim. And it doesn't mean battle to the death, battle royale.



Megan Goodwin 26:40

Right! Right.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:42

And when I talk about theological differences, I like to tell my students that this is kind of a difference like baptisms, right? Most Christians have some understanding of baptism, but not all Christians agree on when, for example, a person should be baptized.



Megan Goodwin 26:56

Oh, boy, do they not.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 26:57

Exactly. And sometimes that disagreement is about denomination, or sect, right? Like, Baptists do X, Methodists do Y. But other times, it's actually about region, or about history, and about popular practice that you can't map neatly onto those divisions.



Megan Goodwin 27:12

Megan Goodwin 27:12
Right.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 27:13

And if we're comparing to Jewish movements, to not just make it about Christianity, 100 years ago, no one would have said "I'm a reformed Jew." And even now, while there are interpretive differences, the real difference between Judaisms is in its practice-- ritual, song, use of English, the frequency of prayer, you name it. So without a comparison, which is where I'd like to end up, the way I teach this in my classe is that Sunni and Shi'i Muslims trace their theological split to a time before they would have either been called Sunni or Shi'i.



Megan Goodwin 27:44

Wait, oh. Wait. Wait, okay. Uh... the differences between Muslim theological interpretations are actually older than the words, the names, for these groups?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 27:57

That's exactly what I'm saying.



Megan Goodwin 27:58

Okay.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 27:59

So after Muhammad died-- Muhammad being the Prophet of Islam and the leader of the earliest Muslim community-- this earliest community of Muslims disagreed on who should succeed Muhammad as their next leader of this fledgling (and sometimes persecuted) community. Some Muslims wanted to follow the fairly democratic practice of the Arab community from which they came, which basically meant men of a certain status could vote on who would be the next leader. Like, this is just a standard practice.



Megan Goodwin 28:29

Okay!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:29

So, some Muslims wanted that. Other Muslims wanted to name 'Ali, Muhammad's nephew and son-in-law, as the next leader, and pointed to something Muhammad had said, like, as evidence that that should be the way they move forward.



Megan Goodwin 28:44

So, some are in favor of, like, voting among adult men in the community, and some are like, "But the Prophet said this thing, and we think that means 'Ali should take over next.'"



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:55

That's exactly right.



Megan Goodwin 28:56

Okay!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 28:56

And both groups took seriously this thing that Muhammad had said. And to paraphrase wildly, this very famous hadith, that 'Ali was the wali of Muhammad. So, wali is this fancy word, but the thing is about all Arabic words, which is so fun, is that it has, like, a lot of different meanings! So, some people interpreted that word as friend, while other members of the community thought it meant something more like a viceregent. You know, like, someone who'd be in charge of the community. Next in line!



Megan Goodwin 29:27

Those are pretty different.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 29:29

Words are hard! Communication is hard. These words have really complicated balances, still to this day-- these are words that are still in use-- and history intervening, right? We have this, like, 1600 years of history since then, means that we can't and don't really know exactly what happened. But what we do know is that the group that later becomes identified with "Sunni" is a global majority of Muslims, and they are the majority at that moment too, and they elect a guy named Abu Bakr and they name him Caliph. *Secret Word of the Day* Another word for king, the caliphate becomes a big deal. I am actually purposely not going to tap on that, like, barrel of worms for all sorts of reasons, but we can get into it later if people feel like it's important. Anyway, the Sunnis are the majority, they elect Abu Bakr, and that's what the community does. This community that later becomes Sunni will trace this lineage back this way.



Megan Goodwin 30:28

Okay

Okay.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 30:28

And Alids, or the followers of 'Ali, don't love this in the moment, but they also don't throw toys out of the pram or something because they were a minority opinion. The majority also wasn't like "Oh, 'Ali, he sucks, down with 'Ali." In fact, 'Ali becomes Calith later on, "elected" by this very same process.



Megan Goodwin 30:47

Okay, fully did not know that. I learned that today. I mean, like, I literally, when I teach this, I hold my fingers up and four go on one hand and one goes on another because there are four rightly guided Caliphs, and 'Ali is the fourth within the Sunni imagination. And 'Ali is the first Imam within the Shi'i imagination, but it's the same guy, right? The same guy has the same leadership role for the early Muslim community, he's just interpreted differently by the generations that follow for all sorts of complicated reasons that, again, we are on the clock! We do not have time for. Yeah, we don't, but it also seems telling that both Sunni and Shi'i Muslims agree that this is an important leader of the community, and it kind of dismantles this idea that, like, no. Cats and dogs.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 31:34

Indeed.



Megan Goodwin 31:35

Okay!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 31:35

And so, again, like, obviously, there's a lot more to it and I want to... like but TL;DR: today's Sunni and Shi'i Muslims trace their theological differences to debates about this rightful position, 'Ali, among many other things. 'Ali is important for both communities. He is more important, however, more central, to those who later become called Shi'a.



Megan Goodwin 32:00

Yeah! Okay, that makes sense. My trained-in-Christianity brain also wonders if there's not a parallel to, like, Jesus! Jesus important to both Christians and Muslims. More important to Christians, but both agree, Jesus, kind of an okay guy. Anyway! This is interesting, but also, I said, short, so...



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 32:27

Dude. How many of those words are you going to try to make the secret word of the day? And YOU try explaining things that are translated thrice over! My God, give me a break!



Megan Goodwin 32:36

You're right, you're right, you're right. I'm just fucking with you, Ted. You're here, you're there, you're every-fucking-where, and you're saying that we can't read today's differences between and among communities as present from the get-go. I feel like you, an historian, are suggesting that things might change over time?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 32:53

Striking, I know.



Megan Goodwin 32:54

Hm, hm. And that there are theological interpretations that separate Sunnis from Shi'a, BUT, as Dr. Rashid tells us, some of those differences aren't... catastrophic? But maybe they get read as catastrophic because Islam gets read within a Christian world religions paradigm, making Sunni and Shi'i like Protestants and Catholics.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 33:15

Well done, lady.



Megan Goodwin 33:16

Thanks! I'm pleased with my own self. I feel like I learned something today. Um, can you say something about practice, though? Like, what's something we might see, I don't know, Shi'i Muslims do that Sunni Muslims might not?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 33:28

That's a great question, and I would say that there's obviously a lot of examples. So, one of the most obvious examples is that while Sunni interpretations of qur'an and hadith say that there are five prayers at five times a day, Shi'a say that those same five prayers can be done at three times of the day. So basically, the word that gets used in English language is abrogating prayers, which-- combining-- combining prayers, but doing the same thing or similar things at those prayer times.



Megan Goodwin 33:58

Megan Goodwin 34:22

Huh! Okay. What else? Dr. Rashid talked about different holidays, or different ways of celebrating holidays?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 34:04

Yeah. So, I guess an easy one here is Ashura, a holy day for both Sunni and Shi'a, that gets observed rather differently across those groups. So, frankly, I am most interested in regional differences, so let me try to weave differences between Muslims and regionality together.



Megan Goodwin 34:23

Ooooh!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 34:24

I know, fancy. It's almost like I'm a professional. Okay! So the basics: Ashura is a holiday in the month of Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar (because it is never not about calendars).



Megan Goodwin 34:36

Hooray!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 34:37

Ashura marks two things: so first, it is about Moses getting free, parting the Red Sea! And before you ask--



Megan Goodwin 34:46

I know him!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 34:47

Yes! Same Moses! Though in Islamic languages, he would be called Musa. So, Moses is important within a religious tradition that literally sees itself as inheriting and continuing the prophetic legacy of Abe, Musa, and Jesus!



Megan Goodwin 35:04

chuckles Gosh! That's interesting!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 35:08

So, that's part one of Ashura. Ashura is also a holiday that marks the martyrdom of Husayn, 'Ali's son, and therefore Muhammad's grandson, during the Battle of Karbala. So like I said before, Shi'a trace their theology and lineage to 'Ali-- so as you might imagine, the commemoration of Husayn's assassination is SUPER important to this group of Muslims. And it's not unimportant to Sunni Muslims, but to make a gross generalization, it's just more important to Shi'a.



Megan Goodwin 35:39

Okay. All right. So how do Muslims celebrate or observe Ashura?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 35:45

For Shi'a, there are a few major rituals. There is memorial services, the visitation of Husayn's tomb in Karbala, which is in Iraq. There are public mourning processions, so like, big parades of people that will mourn in public, and there's the representation of the battle of Karbala, in the form of a play in some places, and there can be rituals of self-flagellation. Some Shi'i Muslims believe that taking part in Ashura washes away their sins, so to speak. Other popular interpretations include the slogan, or the line, "Everywhere is Karbala, everyday is Ashura," which became popular in and around the Iranian Revolution in particular, and is used as a way to mean that... like, fighting oppression, right-- so, how Husayn is remembered standing up to a bad guy-- is all... it's an all the time thing. It's not a one day, right?



Megan Goodwin 36:40

Okay. So it seems like in Shi'i majority places, there are a lot of public rituals around this holiday.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 36:47

Mhm.




Megan Goodwin 36:47

And so, I would expect it in Iran, or Iraq, or Bahrain, or Lebanon, maybe, or Azerbaijan, this would be really important. What do Shi'i Ashura practices look like beyond those majority spaces? Do you know? I bet you do. You know so many things.




Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 37:03


So like, let's take Pakistan, for example.

 Megan Goodwin 37:05


Yeah, okay.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 37:06


Pakistan is Sunni majority. And I think it's something like 80-85% Sunni, 15-20% Shi'a, and there's been quite a lot of anti-Shi'a violence in recent years. Like, I would never want to downplay that. It affects friends of ours like it is a really big deal. That said, even in that tableau of... gosh, persecution, Ashura is a public holiday. Like, banks, and schools, and government offices are closed for it. You best believe it's on the calendar. Shi'i observances, like public morning rituals and processions, are heavily policed in some cities to ensure peacefulness, though some could argue (and I might argue) that they're police for reasons of scrutiny and like... policing?

 Megan Goodwin 38:01

Yeah.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 38:02

At these public rituals, though, some folks will say-- like what this looks like, physically, some folks like beat their chests, or maybe use a rope to hit themselves, and others may even make small cuts on their bodies with razors or knives-- all of which is to symbolize the experience of Husayn before he was beheaded during this Battle of Karbala, but it's also meant to represent that fighting oppression can be painful, and take sacrifices. So, I'm focusing on the self-flagellation piece because it is one of the things that Americans know about Shi'i Islam, it is one of the things that Americans use to prove the barbaric, inherent quality of Shi'a.

 Megan Goodwin 38:47

Oi.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 38:48


Uh huh! And I know that Americans, in particular, usually lose it when they hear about practices that look like things that we might call self-harm-- and I get that-- but if religion is what people do, some people do this. And they do it even though, in recent years, Shi'i imams or clerics have said not to. Because again, religion is what people do, not what rules or leaders say. So, I'm bringing this up on purpose, not to, like, further fetishize this practice, but to address it head on. Because I think when you Google Shi'i practices, this is the first thing that comes up with often very disturbing images.

 Megan Goodwin 39:26

Yeah, yeah. I think we see similar patterns of, like, exoticisation around the Lakota Sundance, right? Where that might be the ONLY thing that people know about the Lakota. But self-harm and self-denial, or self-restriction, show up in so many religious spaces. While you were describing this, I'm thinking about the folks who really take, like, Christian passion plays to the extreme. So, you've got folks who will, like, put on crowns of thorns and drag around a crucifix. That happens every year, still! Like, it happens in smaller ways, too! Like, early Seventh Day Adventists encouraging vegetarianism, or like Catholics doing SO much kneeling during services, or like fasting during Lent, etc., etc., and so forth. And those practices vary among communities and even among practitioners in the same community! I won't, for example, like, recommend to the film Saint Maude, especially if you have a weak stomach, but for folks who've seen it, you know what I'm getting at. And... not to ever imply that religion is not special, because obviously, it's very special to us, but like, legit every dance movie I have ever watched loves to show how fucked up dancers feet get, so let's not pretend harming the body for discipline, art, and/or love is in, any way, unique to religion. So... anyway.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 40:45


That's a great example. It is! It's just a great example. Anyway. Because I'm our timekeeper, let's come back to what I'm saying! So, Ashura isn't only Shi'a, nor is it only mourning, right? So, that's the vast majority of Shi'a practices, but it's not only that! In some parts of Morocco, for example, it's a fairly celebratory mood, from what I understand. There's fasting, as we see elsewhere, but there's also joyful breaking the fast with super sweet foods and fancy meat dishes that make even me, a lifelong vegetarian, feel like meat smells good through these photos?

 Megan Goodwin 41:23

I was gonna say, now I'm hungry. *laughs*

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 41:25

And it's become a day of honoring your own family's departed and deceased. So kids get gifts, there's bonfires and fireworks, and this is in a Sunni majority nation. Morocco, right?

 Megan Goodwin 41:38

Oh, sorry. I was like, "That sounds so good, I WANT that!"

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 41:42

I know. Who doesn't want, like, a really good tajine, right?

M

Megan Goodwin 41:44

Right?! Like, I am hungry for snacks, but also justice, and that sounds like a great way to bring those two together. Awesome. So I think what I'm hearing is that Ashura is important to Sunni and Shi'a, and it has a bunch of practices that are about why that particular group, in that particular time, in that particular space is observing the holiday in the first place, and also, where they are when they are, and who they are and where they fit in social organization. Okay. So, this focus on region makes me want to hear from Dr. Kristian Petersen, whomst I always want to hear from, frankly, and who we tasked with talking about China. All of it. Dr. Petersen is one of our incredible friends whose interests are varied, but his training and his first book was on Islam's development in China.

D

Dr. Kristian Petersen 42:34

My name is Kristian Petersen, and I'm an expert on Muslims in China. I care that students, scholars, my neighbors and community know about what I study because Muslims in China are essential to understanding Islam as a diverse and dynamic tradition, and central to current global politics. The one thing I wish people knew about Islam in China is that Muslims have had a long history in East Asia, going all the way back to its origins. There's evidence of Muslims in the region within a few generations after the death of Muhammad. Just a few 100 years later, elaborate local mosques were built in various cities, and eventually, Sino-Muslim scholars were writing Islamic texts in literary Chinese. Islam is a Chinese religion as much as any other tradition. Interpretations of Islam in China very often conformed to what most Americans might identify as normative Islam, in terms of things like eating habits, customs of dress, ritual practice, or architecture. But at the same time, these shared patterns can take on distinctive expressions that are shaped by broader Chinese traditions and aesthetics. For example, like most mosques across the globe, those in China will have a mihrab indicating the direction of prayer, Arabic calligraphy throughout, and a minaret to send out the call to prayer. But these will be created with features that are distinctly Chinese in nature. Buildings will often have elaborate wooden eaves or stone archways, pagoda-style towers as the minaret, carvings of dragons, sweeping roofs with ceramic tiles, and be built using the logic of Fung Shui philosophy, making mosques almost indistinguishable from Buddhist or Taoist temples for most Americans. Great examples of this unique style of mosque architecture are the Great Mosque in Xi'an, or the Ox Street Mosque in Beijing. One unique thing about Sino-Muslim community is that, in various parts of China, they have developed a tradition of women-only mosques. In these institutions, female leaders head ritual prayer and serve as teachers for religious education. For several centuries, these types of mosques have been built alongside the main community mosque that served the male members, and they hold parallel activities. In one community I visited, I went to a giant new mosque that was just constructed in a Arabian Gulf architectural aesthetic, but instead of demolishing the traditional Chinese style mosque, it was converted into a woman-only institution just adjacent to the new center. To me, this demonstrated how this contemporary way Muslim community understood themselves as part of a global ummah with guiding norms, but also valued and upheld their unique, local practices and vernacular expressions of Islam. For them, it seemed that there was no contradiction or tension between being both Muslim and Chinese. A common framing of Islam in the world religions model is to place it in an east and west dichotomy, that essentializes and privileges the origins of traditions over their historical unfolding. It is organized as a, quote unquote, "Abrahamic" religion that is akin to Judaism and Christianity. Categories like "Eastern tradition,"

or "Asian religions" generally don't include Islam, despite the fact that the vast majority of Muslims live in south or southeast Asia. So, Muslim practices or interpretations of Islam that are shaped by Asian cultures and histories are frequently deemed derivative, peripheral, inauthentic, or unorthodox. These types of conclusions prohibit folks from really seeing how the tradition is carried out across a wide spectrum of vantage points. With the growing visibility of Muslims in China for issues of global politics, practices of corporate capitalism, and international law-- callback to episode 408 on religion law, well done outside your areas of expertise, ladies-- and the growth of active disinformation campaigns about the situation, deeper knowledge of Muslims in the region is certainly necessary today. I would encourage listeners of the pod to check out experts like Guldana Salimjan, Darren Byler, Joshua Freeman, Joe Smith Finley, Tim Grose, Elise Anderson, Rian Thum, and Rachel Harris, who helped bring Uyghur voices to the public by translating their words and sharing their stories.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 47:16

I just adore our friend Kristian. And I'm always shocked by how much I DON'T know about Sino-Islam or Chinese Muslims.



Megan Goodwin 47:23

Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 47:24

Like, it's shocking. But a good reminder that even though I'm often responsible for quite a lot of the world, I don't know most of it.



Megan Goodwin 47:31

What?! Islam is not even what you, Ilyse, a professional, think it is?! Gasp.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 47:37

Gasp. But what I want to underline of Dr. Petersen's guest spot is that Chinese Muslims see no contradiction or tension between being both Muslim and Chinese. Mosques look Chinese because they are in China. That makes... SO much sense.



Megan Goodwin 47:53

Yeah, that checks out. That checks out! I want to say that I learned about women-only and women-led mosques outside the US! I know about the women's mosque in LA, but honestly (and solipsistically), I never thought about women-only mosque spaces outside the US. I know many Muslim leaders in the US debate and disagree on how and when women can lead prayers. We talked about, Dr. AminaWadud on episode 205, and so, like, given that

controversy, it's not surprising that women-only spaces allow for women leaders. I think I am surprised that there had been a thriving example of this that I wasn't aware of, because we don't talk about Islam's plurality, really, and we almost never hear about Islam in China.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 48:38

Which is another thing I actually want to highlight, and underline, and make sure our listeners heard. Dr. Petersen said that in the world's religions model, Islam sort of gets lost. It's "Abrahamic," so it is like Judaism and Christianity in terms of its origins, but Muslims are predominantly, overwhelmingly Asian. Islam, he said, is an Asian religion. But in classes on Asian religions, we rarely, RARELY see Islam taught! Which means that we obscure Islam's Asian manifestations-- which are many!--



Megan Goodwin 49:13

Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 49:14

And it also means that we reinforce the idea that Islam is best understood as Middle Eastern, as opposed to ANYTHING else.



Megan Goodwin 49:25

Infinity this. When we classify Islam in the world religions paradigm, things get really screwed up because it's a screwed up paradigm. And, it's usually because of Islamophobia on top of Orientalism... infinity-sized. But, despite our despair and frustration, it is time to move on to... A Little Bit Leave It!



A Little Bit Leave It 49:50

A Little Bit Leave It soundbit



Megan Goodwin 49:55

Where we're letting you know what we think the most important, most interesting, or most challenging part of the topic is. It's a little bit to leave you with! And I think my A Little bit Leave it for today is twofold. First, there is SO much to this tradition that never makes it into public conversations about Islam-- in popular news media, even in my classes, where my whole plan is to try to show internal variety and complexity. So, there's always more work to do. And second, that even thinking about Islam requires those non-Muslims among us to really question the terms we use to think about it, and how easy it is to slip into Christian-inflected terms, like denomination or whatever, to describe an emphatically NOT Christian tradition. Yeah. Yeah! I guess my Little Bit Leave you is-- or, Little Bit Leave It is-- Don't leave me! Never leave me.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 50:49

laughs Mine is Islam is plural and global. That's it. It's Asian, it's African, it's North and South American, it's European. And beyond that, it's Chinese, Tajik, Iranian, Sudanese, Canadian, American, Trinidadian, Brazilian, French, Russian, and English, among many, many other things.



Megan Goodwin 51:09

And no matter what the French say.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 51:12

Well, I put them there on purpose. Making Islam one thing is dated. Like, 19th century racist, orientalist dated. Like the world's religions paradigm, in fact.



Megan Goodwin 51:22

Way to bring it back around! Now who loves a callback? And if you don't know, now you know...



If You Don't Know, Now You Know 51:28

If You Don't Know, Now You Know soundbit



Megan Goodwin 51:30

Where we get one factoid each. Alright. So, the thing I do the most consistent yelling about in world religions classes days on Islam is that while Americans often assume most Muslims live in the Middle East, A.) Middle from where?! Surprise, your maps are racist again. And B.) Indonesia has the highest Muslim population of any country in the world. Indonesia is not in the Middle East, no matter how porous or messy that designation gets, and while Indonesia's government has a complex relationship to and with Islam, especially in the wake of Dutch colonization, Indonesia does not have a, quote unquote, "Islamic" government.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 52:06

Yeah. Straight up.



Megan Goodwin 52:07

Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 52:08

And I guess, spoilers for next episode-- we're gonna talk a lot about this "Middle East" and what it does to studying Islam... full tilt.



Megan Goodwin 52:16

Yeah, yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 52:18

Okay, um... I have two factoids, because... we both do that, so why not? One is one that I've said before, but it's worth repeating because every time people-- every time Christians want to put their Christianity onto Islam, the thing that they're not willing to talk about is all of the Christian prophets that show up. So, my favorite fun fact about Islam when I teach the Qur'an, to non-Muslims, is that Mary, like, the Virgin Mary, like, Mother of God (allegedly) is in the Qur'an more than she's in the Bible.



Megan Goodwin 52:50

Okay, A.) that's a really fun factoid that I had forgotten, and B.) I liked the allegedly. Well done.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 52:55

I mean, I just... I'm a Jewish person, so I'm not sure that I got all the mom's, but... that's neither here nor there. Anyway! The second fun fact is that if you drew a circle around South and Southeast Asia, more Muslims would live in that circle than beyond it, despite that circle having fewer square miles of land than the rest of the world combined. So like, Islam is Asian.



Megan Goodwin 53:21

Islam as an Asian religion, like Dr. Petersen was telling us?




Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 53:23


Exactly.





Megan Goodwin 53:26


Well, on that note, don't pack up your stuff yet, nerds. It's time for homework.


 Simpsons 53:32
Homework!


 Megan Goodwin 53:33
As always, we've got citations... so many citations, so many references and other goodies! And transcripts! Stashed at keepingit101.com for every single episode, including this one. Check 'em out! IRMF, go first. Homework me!


 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 53:47
Alright, then. So, Goodwin, how about I cite Kristian and you cite Hussein?

 Megan Goodwin 53:51
Yeah! Love it.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 53:51
To split up our guests?

 Megan Goodwin 53:52
Sure!

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 53:52
Okay. So, Dr. Petersen's first book, "Interpreting Islam in China: Pilgrimage, Scripture, and Language in the Han Kitab" is a really good book. And frankly, it is all the things I didn't know about Islam in China. He has another book, of which he's the editor, called "Muslims in the Movies: A Global Anthology," which is just out last year. He's also got another edited volume, this time with Christopher Cantwell, called "Digital Humanities and Research Methods in Religious Studies," which, frankly, is a little off topic from Islam, but it's so worth it.

 Megan Goodwin 54:26
It's really smart.

 Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 54:26



So, everyone go check that out. And then, there's an article that teaches brilliantly well in my Islam and Race class, titled "Intersectional Islamophobia: The Case of a Black Ahmadi Muslim Celebrity." Yeah. Teaches really, really brilliantly. And I will say, as my last, like pimpin' our guest moment, that Kristian is a bomb.com podcaster, one of the OG podcasters in religious studies, and I will link to his MANY podcasts in the show notes. So, I obviously have too many resources to share here on Islam.



Megan Goodwin 55:02

Do you?!



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 55:03

Here are four of-- on some basics if we've piqued your interest. My advisor, Carl Ernst's "Following Muhammad" is an oldie but a goodie at this point, and I think does a really good job of balancing Sunni and Shi'i Islams, which a lot of introductory books absolutely do not.



Megan Goodwin 55:19

Yeah.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 55:19

So, a lot of introductory books-- this is, like, a warning moment, friends-- a lot of introductory books, in the interests of space and attention, take a majoritarian view, which means to essentially excise Shi'ism, or put it in one chapter, which I think does violence. This book does not too bad. Another goodie that's easy to read and assigned well in classes, and when we're in book clubs, is Sophia Rose Arjana's book "Pilgrimage in Islam: Traditional and Modern Practices." It is not just about hajj! It is about pilgrimage literally around the world, which is why I like it so much. Then there's Nile Green's "Global Islam: a Very Short Introduction." It's in that series, Very Short Introduction, and it really is about the whole world. So, again, I give it a big thumbs up. And, one of my Islamic Studies heroes, Kecia Ali's "Lives of Muhammad" will talk about the prophet, and all of the manifestations that Muslims use him for. But I keep a running list-- and by running list, I mean it's about six pages long-- of good, accessible, and usually available in public library books on Islam, which I will post the whole thing of it in the show notes. I'm gonna quit. Goodwin, your turn.



Megan Goodwin 56:32

Okay! It's my turn. So, if you want to delve into the works of Dr. Hussein Rashid, we can start with "Ms. Marvel's America," which he co-edited with Jessica Baldanzi. Love a comics moment, very exciting. For our teacher friends, check out "Diverse Muslim Narratives: Rethinking Islam 101." For thinking about Sufism and Shi'a, "QawwÄÄ« and Home: 'ÄÄ« in (Im)migrant Identity." Let's see. On intersectionality: "American Muslim (Un)Exceptionalism:

#BlackLivesMatter and #BringBackOurGirls," which Dr. Rashid wrote with Precious Rasheeda. And then, there is a Religion For Breakfast short on Islam on YouTube, which, those all teach really well. I shall also rec the excellent resource edited by our friend, and friend of the pod, Tina Howe, the "Routledge Handbook of Islam and Gender," and I'm also going to suggest Dr. Petersen's OTHER edited volume on Muslims and the movies, "New Approaches to Islam and Film" because, one, it's awesome, and two, I have a chapter in it on "A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night," which is an Iranian American western (like cowboys, kind of?) women-directed and led but NOT feminist vampire movie. Good times. There's just, there's so much good stuff. I'm going to limit myself to two more, both of which really changed my thinking in big ways (and which I think we've definitely mentioned on the pod before): Cemil Ayden's "The Idea of the Muslim World" and Saba Mahmood's "Politics of Piety." And I lied, actually, because I have one more. The silent partner in our Golden Girls-esque trio, Dr. Kathleen Marie Foody, has a number of very smart articles about Iran and Islam, so check out all of her stuff, but I am predictably partial to her piece on "Muslims and the Media: from Texts to Affects." Oh, and speaking of Muslims and the media, I still need to watch the Netflix series "We Are Ladyparts," about which I have heard many good things.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 58:23

Yeah, it's quite good. It's quite good!



Megan Goodwin 58:25

I'll put it on my list. It's been on my list. I need to watch it. I've... been watching a lot of Love Island instead because I'm trash. Anyway. BIG THANKS to those of you writing reviews on iTunes, Amazon, and Google. We found out you can't do it on Spotify, right?



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 58:36

Yep. You can just star us, which is also useful!



Megan Goodwin 58:39

Yeah! We love a star. But we can't see who's doing it, so if you want us to know that we love you and you love us, write us a review on iTunes, Amazon or Google, because it really helps! And if you want to be nerd of a week, write us a review so we can see your silly handle, you sillies! Our nerds of the week this time are: SISWP26, AlaskaRunning, and BDL'99.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 59:04

Join us next time for more HISTORY OF THE WORLD (RELIGIONS) PART 1, when we chat about Islamic traditions, and are helped out by special guest Dr. Debra Majeed, who chastised my use of experts-- since expertise comes from everywhere! I can't wait for this.



Megan Goodwin 59:18

Love that. Shout out to our research assistant, Alex Castellano, whose transcription work makes this pod accessible and therefore awesome! And if you need more religion nerderie (and of course, you do), you know where to find us! Twitter. The answer is Twitter.



Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst 59:31

You can find Megan on Twitter @mpgPhD, and me, I'm Ilyse, @ProfIRMF, and the show @KeepingIt_101. Find the website at keepingit101.com. Peep the Insta. Drop us a rating or review and become nerd royalty. With that, peace out nerds!



Megan Goodwin 59:51

Do your homework. It's on the syllabus!



Bonus Ending 1:00:16

"Bashir With the Good Beard" from "We Are Lady Parts"