

Deep Culture Podcast – Transcript

The Deep Culture Podcast explores the psychological impact of intercultural experiences, informed by the sciences of brain, culture and mind. Join hosts **Joseph Shaules** and **Ishita Ray** as we look at the personal growth that can come from travel, living and working abroad, learning a foreign language, growing up in a multicultural context—and the challenges of bridging different cultural worlds.

Episode 51 – Culture and Religion (Pt 1) – Starting Conversations

Are you a believer? 84% of the world’s population identifies with religion, yet intercultural education barely mentions the topic. In Part 1 of this two-part episode, Joseph Shaules and Ishita Ray explore the connection between culture and religion. We learn how culture shapes attitudes towards secular and religious values from: Sanne Bosma, Emre Seven, Torhild Liane Harr Skarnes, Luan Borges de Carvalho, and P.V. Satyanarayana Raju. Religious studies scholar David Shaules argues that religion and culture are closely related, and that secular values do not magically make us neutral. In Part 2, we will hear the experiences of those navigating in and between religious and secular worldviews.

Time	Speaker	
00:00:00	Ishita	You mentioned that we were doing this podcast episode on culture and religion and there was this silence. People weren't sure what to say. It was a bit awkward. And then finally someone said, “Well, that's a very touchy topic!”
00:00:34	Joseph	Hello, this is Joseph Shaules, and welcome to the Deep Culture podcast where we explore culture and the science of mind. And I am here with Ishita Ray. So great to be with you again.
00:00:47	Ishita	Hi, Joseph. It's great to be with you too. So, Joseph, the title of this episode is <i>Culture and Religion - Starting Conversations</i> . And I must say that this is a really ambitious topic. In fact, we decided to split it into two parts and we'll do part two next month.
00:01:13	Joseph	And speaking of religion, both of us were in Kolkata India last week for a wedding of a colleague and we witnessed a beautiful ceremony.
00:01:24	Ishita	It was a very Hindu ceremony. And you recorded a bit of sound to give our listeners a tiny taste of that.

00:01:50	[Ceremonial chants play]	
00:01:57	Joseph	I really enjoyed it and to me it looked very traditional. There were prayers, chanting, a lot of religious symbolism. I really liked the blessing with flower petals.
00:02:12	Ishita	But it was also untraditional in many ways. It was officiated by women priestesses, there were English translations of the Sanskrit mantras, and some of the archaic patriarchal rituals were done away with.
00:02:33	Joseph	So in the end, it was modern, but it was still quite religious.
00:02:38	Ishita	That's right. And in India, you never really get away from religion. According to the World Values Survey, 94% of Indians say that they believe in God and 75% say that they are a religious person.
00:02:58	Joseph	And that's not just India. According to the Pew Research Center, 84% of the world's population identifies with a religious group.
00:03:09	Ishita	And yet, this is a huge blind spot. In the field of intercultural education. Religion is barely talked about. In a cross-cultural training, you may hear etiquette rules like "Don't turn your back towards the altar" or simply, "Avoid talking about religion in business settings".
00:03:34	Joseph	Well, if you pick up a textbook in intercultural communication, it's full of abstract topics like essentialism or nonverbal codes, but many of them don't mention religion at all.
00:03:51	Ishita	But the truth is that religion is central to the lives of people all over the world. In India, you simply cannot talk about cultural diversity without talking about religious diversity.
00:04:08	Joseph	So we thought we need to start a conversation about the connection between culture and religion.

00:04:17	Ishita	Our main point is that in many ways, religious values are cultural and secular values are cultural. They shape our minds at a deep level. They shape our moral compass and the way we see the world. They become part of our identity.
00:04:39	Joseph	And that's true whether you and I happen to personally feel religious or not. The values of a society are its cultural DNA.
00:04:50	Ishita	And so in part one of this two part series, we are going to explore ways in which religion is cultural. And in part two, we'll focus on what it means to navigate different religious worlds and try to understand how cultural bridge people can make sense of all this complexity.
00:05:13	Joseph	And that brings us to part one - Where do we begin?
Part One – Where do we begin?		
00:05:32	Joseph	So if we want to talk about the relationship between religion and culture, we need to think about what we mean when we use this word, religion. So let's start with some definitions.
00:05:46	Ishita	Here's one by sociologist Émile Durkheim. He defined religion as: “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things.”
00:06:01	Joseph	And back in 1871, the renowned anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor defined religion as “the belief in spiritual beings.”
00:06:14	Ishita	More recently, Peter Mandaville and Paul James say that religion is: “a relatively bounded system of beliefs, symbols and practices that addresses the nature of existence.” So, religion answers questions about the meaning of life.
00:06:39	Joseph	But, we need to stop here for a minute, because there is in fact something cultural about what we are doing right now. Because we are trying to define religion as a concept, as a single thing.

00:06:51	Ishita	<p>Which is not the way that many people around the world think about it. This is how the Macmillan Encyclopedia of Religion explains this.</p> <p>“The very attempt to define religion, to find some distinctive or possibly unique essence or set of qualities that distinguish the religious from the remainder of human life, is primarily a Western concern. The attempt is a natural consequence of the Western speculative, intellectualistic and scientific disposition.”</p>
00:07:33	Joseph	<p>Wow, so that was really a mouthful of geekiness. Let's unpack that a bit. Looking at religion as a concept with certain qualities reflects a Western intellectual tradition, one that assumes that there are two worlds, the physical and the non-physical. And so the way we make sense of the non-physical world is seen as the core of religion.</p>
00:07:59	Ishita	<p>But many, many people don't make this distinction. Particularly in more traditional societies, there is no clear divide between the material and the spiritual.</p> <p>In Hinduism, the Sanskrit term “<i>Advaita</i>”, from the Vedas, these ancient Hindu texts, literally means non-secondness. And the idea is that the universe is one being. It's common to feel that an everyday object, say books or utensils, can be quote unquote, pure or impure.</p>
00:08:41	Joseph	<p>But what is common to different religious traditions is that they relate to specific human concerns. The nature of our existence, the meaning of life, what it means to be good.</p>
00:08:55	Ishita	<p>So, our next question is: How can we start conversations about culture and religion? And one starting point is to ask how attitudes towards religion vary around the world.</p>
00:09:11	Joseph	<p>We can learn a lot by simply asking someone: How is religion viewed in the society you grew up in? Or: What is your experience of religion growing up?</p>
00:09:24	Ishita	<p>So we tried this by asking these questions to the members of the podcast team. Let's hear first from Sanne Bosma.</p>

00:09:36	Sanne	<p>Growing up in the Netherlands, I can say that the general sentiment in my family towards religion was predominantly negative. There was an emphasis on how it relates to conflicts in the world and how it provides many rules for people to obey, some of which were really hard for us to understand.</p> <p>In my family for many years, we had to deal with various illnesses. I vividly remember when a Christian neighbor visited us and said that some divine power had determined this for us. We were shocked and offended. It felt that we were somehow to blame.</p> <p>In other moments, we could also imagine how religion could be a source of strength in difficult times. For example, the belief that one meets their loved ones again after they die.</p>
00:10:34	Ishita	Those are some pretty negative views. Religion relates to conflict, rules to obey. She says her family was shocked and offended by the religious views of this neighbor.
00:10:49	Joseph	And we've all experienced this, right? If it feels like someone is challenging our values or how we make sense of the world, it's easy to feel defensive.
00:10:59	Ishita	Of course, there are many people in the Netherlands who see religion in positive terms. But, suspicion of religion is more common in secular societies, and the Netherlands is a very secular society.
00:11:16	Joseph	According to the Pew Research Center, only 17% of Dutch people say that they go to a place of worship. And according to Ipsos, 64% of the Dutch agree with the statement that: "Religion does more harm in the world than good."
00:11:34	Ishita	So these attitudes are cultural. And so to explore this some more, we also asked Lia about her experience growing up in another largely secular society, Norway. Let's take a listen.
00:11:53	Lia	Norway used to be Christian country, but today, religion is often seen as outdated or controlling. So discussions about religion and faith are often avoided. There's often an unspoken perception that

		being religious implies a lack of neutrality and hidden agendas. Not being religious equals neutrality.
00:12:22	Ishita	Those are strong statements. "Religion is outdated or controlling." "Being religious implies a hidden agenda." In India, 99% of Indians identify with a religion. 71% of Indians go to a temple or a place of worship. And so, you simply won't hear many Indians saying negative things about religion.
00:12:52	Joseph	And again, Norway is a highly secular society. One survey conducted by Gallup International found that Norway was the least religious society in Europe. Less than 30% of people believe in a church or deity, and only 2% of Norwegians regularly attend church. But if these are values in a secular society, it raises the question, how will a person of religious faith see all of this?
00:13:21	Ishita	To find out, we spoke to a friend of mine and a first-time podcast contributor, Luan Borges de Carvalho. Luan grew up in Brazil and has lived in India and the United States. His faith is very important to him and he's given this a lot of thought. Let's take a listen.
00:13:46	Luan	I view highly secular societies with skepticism. It's difficult for me to believe that life can truly be fulfilling without any influence of faith. I also struggle with the notion that decisions can be entirely rational without any guiding principles or values. For me, faith and purpose are integral to find meaning and direction in life, shaping not only personal choices, but also how we relate to the world around us.
00:14:35	Joseph	So, that's really a big contrast. Lia says that in Norway, what's valued is neutrality. For Luan, on the other hand, he questions rationalism. His focus is on faith and the sacred.
00:14:49	Ishita	So what about the values he finds in more secular societies? Let's hear what Luan says.

00:15:01	Luan	I believe the social values of individual freedom, equality and rationality often mask a hidden religious or ideological agenda. It places the individual at the center of existence and leads people toward a hedonistic approach to life. Ultimately, this can result in a profound crisis of meaning and purpose.
00:15:40	Ishita	Wow. So, Lia says that in Norway, religion is seen as having a: “hidden agenda”. But then Luan says that secular values can mask a hidden agenda.
00:15:58	Joseph	And neither of them heard the other, but they both use this very similar language. So in both cases there was this skepticism about the other.
00:16:09	Ishita	And Luan's ideas are not unusual. In many societies, it is taken for granted that faith and religious community take us beyond our selfish concerns. Luan explains it in this way.
00:16:28	Luan	Religion, in my view, plays a vital role in society by creating order and encouraging community engagement. It provides a structure for respecting and preserving the spiritual practices of those who came before us, forming a continuum of collective wisdom. Rather than constantly reinventing the wheel, religion allows us to build upon the truths already uncovered by previous generations.
00:17:09	Joseph	So, Luan's view of religion is as a force for good in society. And I'm struck that it's really a collective vision of good. It's for the good of everyone.
00:17:21	Ishita	In India, it's not unusual for people to feel that so called Western societies are self-indulgent. That secular values corrupt us and spiritual values do a society good. I learned more about this from my friend Satya, who is an observant Hindu and has lived in the United States and Mexico. He has shared his thoughts in writing, so I will quote him. “Some societies give a lot of importance to success. However, they do not teach how to handle the lows. Religion can make a person strong and righteous.

		<p>Every religion gives people a set of rules to abide by. When there are temptations, it provides a way to fight temptation. For example, money is a temptation. Using wrong means to earn money will always lead to bad consequences. So that temptation should be avoided. One should live within one's means. There should be no shortcuts.</p> <p>But, some so called guardians of religion twist the rules and lure people with shortcuts. Religion has thus gone into the wrong hands and the guardians use it for their own benefit. This form of religion is harmful to society. Religion in its true form can make society great.”</p>
00:19:19	Joseph	So this is getting really interesting. Satya talks about the negative consequences of religion, like Lia and Sanne do. But he blames this on corrupt people, the so-called guardians of religion, who use it for their own benefit.
00:19:36	Ishita	And so for Satya, the problem isn't religion. It's our failure to live up to its standards.
00:19:44	Joseph	I think we can find some deep cultural differences here. In the secular humanist tradition, people are the measure of good. Whereas in many religious traditions, such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam, it is God in whatever form that is the measure of all things and the standard that humans need to live up to. So, religion gives us that higher standard, whether people live up to it or not.
00:20:14	Ishita	Well, it's really not easy to digest all of this. We are touching upon the philosophy of religion here. So, let's regroup. One way to start conversations about religion across cultures is to ask how religion is viewed in the society where you grew up. And when we do that, we find some deep-rooted cultural differences.
00:20:40	Joseph	And that brings us to part two - Religion is cultural.
Part Two – Religion is cultural		
00:20:58	Joseph	So Ishita, by asking about cultural attitudes towards religion, we find cultural differences. So, let's dig into this a bit more.

00:21:08	Ishita	Well, more secular societies tend to be individualistic. And that often means that religion is considered private. And this can make conversations about religion uncomfortable.
00:21:23	Joseph	And we noticed that at a formal fundraising dinner that we attended recently. It was sponsored by the German Charity Fund in Tokyo. It was a lot of fun. We had this multi course dinner in a ballroom held at the Tokyo American Club. It was quite fancy. We ate duck.
00:21:44	Ishita	Well, it's not the kind of place we normally hang out. And this is a bit off topic, but we were there because you had agreed to play the music, accompanying your friend and music collaborator and singer Liv Johansson. So let's just hear a little bit of the music from that evening. [Music clip plays] A big shout out to Liv. You were great.
00:22:59	Joseph	Anyway, we were sitting at a table with Europeans who had lots of international experience. These were high level executives, there were so called third culture kids. And even the German ambassador to Japan, she was there.
00:23:15	Ishita	But at a certain point you mentioned that we were doing this podcast episode on culture and religion and there was this silence. People weren't sure what to say. It was a bit awkward. And then finally someone said: "Well, that's a very touchy topic."
00:23:43	Joseph	And I think this is really common in secular societies, that you don't speak of religion in polite company. It's a cultural norm not to speak about religion.
00:23:53	Ishita	And that is so different from societies where religion is simply part of the fabric of everyday life. In rural Hindu communities in North India, for example, you will often hear people greeting each other saying: "Ram, Ram" or "Jai Sri Krishna" or "Radhe, Radhe". All of those are names of Gods.

		In Islam, you hear people say “Bismillah, al Rahman, al Rahim” or “Alhamdulillah”, “in the name of God” or “Praise be to God” before doing anything, especially something good.
00:24:38	Joseph	And so when religion is an open topic, something that is public, it changes the whole dynamic. And this also reminds me of a conversation that you and I had during a different meal in Tokyo. This time we were at a Turkish restaurant and the Turkish owner struck up a conversation with us. And religion came up really early on.
00:25:01	Ishita	It did. He learned that you were American and that your name was Joseph, and he immediately referenced Yusuf or as he is known in English, in the Christian tradition, Joseph.
00:25:17	Joseph	Joseph is a religious figure found in the Christian Old Testament, in Jewish scriptures and in the Islamic tradition. He was sold into slavery when he was young, but through prophecy, he gained the trust of the king.
00:25:33	Ishita	And that became a way to start a conversation, to create a connection. And it worked. We had a good conversation.
00:25:44	Joseph	But here's the tricky part - using religion to connect requires a cultural understanding of other religious traditions - the history, the social norms, the values common to that tradition, what is considered sacred.
00:26:01	Ishita	And this is the key point for cultural bridge people. Conversations about religion can help us gain the cultural knowledge we need to connect.
00:26:12	Joseph	And ignorance of those things can create problems. And this is something that podcast team member Lia has experience with.
00:26:25	Lia	Religion is a powerful and complex thing, and I've seen both the beautiful side and the ugly side of religion close up. I have also seen how naive attitudes towards religion can create misunderstanding and tension. When I worked at the Center for Asylum Seekers, I observed a Norwegian therapist who was non-

		religious yet attempted to incorporate faith into therapy sessions. While well intentioned, she lacked knowledge and understanding. She assumed her position was neutral, but she seemed unaware of the cultural and spiritual sensitivities involved. For instance, she mixed worship practices from different religions, believing this was acceptable. She didn't recognize that secularism itself represents a specific worldview rather than a neutral position. And it overlooked tensions between different religious groups. What is sacred is not always up for discussions or to be shared out of context.
00:27:47	Ishita	One thing that stands out for me in Lia's story is that being religious is not simply a matter of individual belief or a set of practices. Religion in much of the world is closely related to community.
00:28:02	Joseph	So, there's a cultural gap there. This therapist needed a better cultural understanding of the religious communities involved.
00:28:15	Ishita	Also, Lia says that secularism is a worldview. It's cultural. And one thing that interests me about secular and religious worldviews is the way they deal with diversity.
00:28:30	Joseph	Universalistic religious traditions like Islam or Christianity often emphasize the idea that faith unites people in the face of diversity, that it brings people together. We find this, for example, in the idea that we are all children of the same God, or the story of the Good Samaritan in the Christian New Testament.
00:28:54	Ishita	But it's also true that it doesn't always work that way. And that's something that podcast team member Emre Seven has experienced firsthand.
00:29:08	Emre	I believe all religions do carry one single message: "Be a good person. Or, if you cannot, do not be a bad person and do not harm anybody." That's so simple. So yes, I see how religion can emphasize universal truths. How it can bring people of different languages and different cultures together, as long as they share the same faith. When I told my family that I will marry my wife, Elvina, who is not from Turkey,

		<p>the first thing my maternal uncle said to me was: “She is Muslim, right?” After he learned that she is Muslim, the fact that she is a foreigner lost its significance. She is accepted.</p> <p>So, religion brings people of the same faith together, while often keeping them apart from the other groups. In Turkey, the Gagauz Turkic minority living in Moldova, are often considered less from us than, say, Palestinians just because the Gagauz are mostly Orthodox Christians and Palestinians are Muslim.</p> <p>So yes, religion can be a powerful force for bringing diverse peoples together. But community works both ways. It brings certain people in and excludes others.</p>
00:30:42	Ishita	Emre's experience really resonates with me. In India, religion keeps communities enmeshed, but it can also create separation and conflict. So, bringing diverse people together requires that everyone live up to their highest religious standard.
00:31:05	Joseph	And I think that in more individualistic and secular societies, there's the idea that it's by keeping religion out of the equation that we can ensure that diverse people can get along. These are kind of opposite assumptions about how to make diversity work.
00:31:23	Ishita	So let's regroup. We have been talking about cultural differences in attitudes towards religion and the need to gain a cultural understanding of different worldviews, and also the difference between religion as something individual and private, or public and communal.
00:31:47	Joseph	And all of that brings us to part three - religion and identity.
Part Three – Religion and Identity		
00:32:06	Joseph	So, Ishita, let's take a step back here and think a bit about what all of this means. And I think one challenge for people navigating these different worldviews is that our feelings of right and wrong, of the meaning of life, these kinds of things, they're such a deep part of our identities.
00:32:25	Ishita	Right, our religious faith or our secular values, they're not just abstractions. They are who we are. We want to defend them,

		protect them. And defending one's faith or worldview feels very right, and the other can feel very wrong indeed.
00:32:48	Joseph	So, if we want to start conversations about religion, we need to talk about how our values and our worldview are deeply tied to our sense of self, to our identity.
00:33:00	Ishita	And to do this, we decided to talk to someone that knows more about this than we do. Your son, David. He is living in California with his family, and he has a PhD in religious studies.
00:33:18	Joseph	Yes, he does. And his research relates to religion and identity. For example, how religious communities develop and maintain a shared sense of identity. And I wanted to ask him how he looks at the connection between religion and culture. Let's take a listen.
00:33:39	Joseph	Hello from Tokyo.
00:33:40	David	Hello from San Francisco.
00:33:42	Joseph	How's California?
00:33:44	David	It's nice. The weather is great. You should try it sometime.
00:33:48	Joseph	I should. I should try it more often. Well, thank you for talking to me today. I told you we're doing this episode on culture and religion, and I just could not pass up the chance to ask you some questions about things that you know a lot about. I think there are a lot of intercultural trainers who are not that comfortable talking about religion. And what we want to do is start a conversation.
00:34:12	David	I think it's a great idea to start talking about the overlap and intersection between culture and religion, because I think they have many ways that those two subjects could inform one another.
00:34:24	Joseph	One question is, what is religion?
00:34:26	David	I was giving this some thought, and I don't think the definition of religion is that different from the definition of culture, actually. It's

		basically a set of attitudes and beliefs and practices that a community engages in, but it happens to be centered around typically, a superhuman power or powers or something transcendental.
00:34:51	Joseph	<p>So we sometimes say that anytime people come together and interact, that that creates culture. That culture is created through interaction. So we can have family culture, we can have company culture, we can have regional culture.</p> <p>So, if religion is a community, does that mean that every religion has its own culture?</p>
00:35:13	David	I would say so, yeah, 100%. It's fundamentally a lot of often unspoken assumptions about appropriate behavior and beliefs about the way the world should work and how it does work. And that influences the community and the individual behavior and social expectations.
00:35:33	Joseph	So some religious communities are tighter than others. Like, there's a big difference between being inside and outside, whereas other religious communities are looser. Those boundaries are not so clear or not so high. How does that affect identity or how does that affect the religious community?
00:35:54	David	There's definitely a correlation where the more tightly knit the community tends to be, the more strongly that it impacts one's identity. Right? When I think of something as being part of one's identity, the way I understand that, based on my work with social identity theory, is that it means that when that community is lauded or praised or when that community is threatened or insulted, that you take that personally. Right? That attacks against the community or attacks against oneself.
00:36:27	Joseph	<p>We've spoken to people from highly secular societies. They say things like, I grew up learning to mistrust religion, or I grew up learning that religion is full of rules people are forced to follow.</p> <p>My sense is that people who are defining themselves in secular terms feel very strongly about those values.</p>

00:36:53	David	Yeah, religion is absolutely a source of identity, but it certainly doesn't have a monopoly on giving people a sense of identity and belonging. I found it more interesting to start to see how the behavior within religious communities actually was very much reflective of the behavior we see in other parts of our life and other parts of the world.
00:37:14	Joseph	People we've talked to from secular societies have said they were raised to feel that secular values are more objective and religious values are more subjective.
00:37:27	David	I recently came across research that was showing that people's quote-unquote, objectivity goes out the window when the questions at hand are directly pertinent to their sense of identity and their sense of belonging. There is not a pure, objective standpoint that somehow secularists have that other communities don't. That, unfortunately, the world is way more complicated than that and our perception is much more complicated than that. I am a huge proponent of scientific inquiry, and I absolutely am a firm believer in the scientific process. That's one of my personal core values. But it's disingenuous, I think, for secularists to claim that they're somehow immune to the partisanship and the confirmation bias and all these things that that can influence our thinking.
00:38:19	Joseph	<p>Some religious traditions are more grounded in individualist thinking and others are more grounded in communal thinking. So I'm thinking, for example, the Christian tradition as it developed in Europe is closely related to the individual's inner moral compass. Particularly in Protestantism, the individual's relationship with God.</p> <p>Islam, on the other hand, there's a focus on the community of believers. Sometimes believers are talked about as different parts of the same body. So, for a person who grows up and in a more interdependent community, it seems that their religious identity will feel, be experienced differently than someone who grows up in a society that's more individualistic and where religion is seen as something personal and individual.</p>

00:39:16	David	Yeah, I think that's right. I think individualistic religious practice is very W.E.I.R.D., like very much a modern Western creation. And if you made reference to the Protestants, and that's really for Christianity in particular, that's really the catalyst moment, right? Where there was this shift in the religious community to a more individualistic approach to belief and faith.
00:39:48	Joseph	Well, I'm going to turn off the recording. I wanted to thank you for taking this time with me, David. It's been a real pleasure.
00:39:56	David	Yeah, thank you so much for having me. It's been wonderful.
00:40:09	Ishita	This is so great that you could have a father-son talk about this. You really are starting conversations.
00:40:18	Joseph	It was really, really fun. I enjoyed it.
00:40:22	Ishita	I was struck by David's description of religious communities as simply one type of cultural community. I was also interested in his idea that secular values can be a part of one's identity, just as religious values can be.
00:40:42	Joseph	And what I took away from that is that cultural bridge people have a lot to gain by looking at religious and secular values in terms of cultural communities rather than simply as a set of beliefs or practices.
00:40:59	Ishita	And of course, there are highly religious believers in secular societies and quite secular people in religious societies. Each individual has to navigate the personal values within a larger society.
00:41:16	Joseph	Well, I'm from a rather secular, individualistic society in the United States, and I am probably guilty of feeling that my secular values are somehow more rational when in fact they are largely intuitive. They are something that we feel.
00:41:34	Ishita	And this reminds me of a quote from the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, who said: "When it comes to moral judgment, we think we are scientists discovering the truth, but actually we are lawyers arguing for positions we arrived at by other means."

00:41:55	Joseph	And there's a little bit of lawyer in all of us. We feel we are right, and we want to tell other people that we are right.
00:42:05	Ishita	And it may even be that people who rely on faith understand clearly that they are making moral judgments, whereas those with secular values may not.
00:42:19	Joseph	Well, I like how David navigates this issue because he talked about the scientific method and empiricism as a core personal value, but he doesn't pretend to somehow magically be more objective.
00:42:33	Ishita	It's tricky. We have to keep our moral compass even as we recognize that our values are influenced by culture.
00:42:43	Joseph	But let's get back to the point that we raised at the beginning. We said that more than 80% of the world population identifies with a religion. And we've said that religion is cultural. And that means navigating in and between religious communities is an extremely common form of intercultural experience.
00:43:06	Ishita	And that's why we wanted to bring religion into conversations about intercultural understanding.
00:43:13	Joseph	And I think we've made a bit of a start, but we have largely been sticking to generalities. So in the next episode, we'd like to take a more personal look at the experiences of people navigating culture and religion. And we also want to dive more deeply into the moral intuitions that guide our feelings about right and wrong.
00:43:37	Ishita	And finally, let us acknowledge, we are not experts in religion or the psychology of religion. There are so many things we haven't touched upon.
00:43:50	Joseph	But I'm really happy that we've been able to start this conversation and hear these different voices. And I think that's a good place to end this episode. So let's share some of our sources. We found quotes defining religion on the Wikipedia page dedicated to religion. We quote statistics from a report produced by Ipsos <i>The Global Village in</i>

		<p>2023, as well as the World Values Survey and the report titled <i>The Global Religious landscape</i>, published in 2012 by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Also check out my son David's PhD research <i>Galatians and social identity theory</i>.</p> <p>The Deep Culture Podcast is sponsored by the Japan Intercultural Institute, an NPO dedicated to intercultural education and research. I am the director of JII. We have a favor to ask. We are completely non-commercial. You will never hear an ad on this podcast. No one is getting paid. So please support us by posting this episode on social media, writing a review on Apple Podcasts, and becoming a member of the Japan Intercultural Institute. It's a very low-cost way to support the work that we do. Just do a web search for the Japan Intercultural Institute and join the JII family. You can also contact us directly at dcpodcasts@japanintercultural.org</p> <p>A special thanks to my son David Shaules for sharing his expertise with us today, as well as Luan Borges de Carvalho and P.V. Satyanarayana Raju for sharing their thoughts about religion and society. As well as regular podcast team members Emre Seven, Sanne Bosma and Lia Torhild Liane Harr Skarnes. And a particularly warm thank you to Liu Liu, who has contributed so much to the podcast as he will be moving on from the team. We have learned so much from you. And finally, thanks to our sound engineer Robinson Fritz and our administrator Ikumi Fritz. And thanks to you Ishita, for sharing this adventure with me.</p>
00:46:05	Ishita	Thank you so much Joseph. It was great starting these conversations with you.