

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 52 – Culture and Religion (Part 2): Navigating Worldviews

How do you navigate between different moral worldviews? In Part 2 of this two-part episode, Joseph Shaules and Ishita Ray explore the connection between culture and religion. We learn about moral intuitions—the feelings of right and wrong that guide our moral compass. We explore why religion is such a touchy topic, and hear about the challenges of navigating different moral realities from: Sanne Bosma, Emre Seven, and Safa Abdul Rezak. We find inspiration in those who find ways to bridge these gaps and reconcile different truths.

| Time | Speaker | |
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| 00:00:00 | Joseph | (Hook) He asked me if I accepted that the Bible was the word of God and that Jesus was my Lord and Savior. I told him that I didn't feel that the Bible was the only source of truth. He said, "Ah, you are a secular humanist," which was for him, I guess, a terrible thing. 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. It's our first podcast of the year. Happy to be starting off the year with you. |
| 00:00:48 | Ishita | Hi Joseph, it's great to be back in the new year. Wish you and our listeners a very happy new year. |
| 00:00:55 | Joseph | So, Ishita, this is episode 52, part 2 of an episode on religion and culture. |
| 00:01:03 | Ishita | And I have to say, people are really reacting to this topic. We've heard: "Well, that's a touchy topic", but we've also had reactions like: "It's about time". |
| 00:01:16 | Joseph | Well, it is about time. In part one, we talked about the fact that the majority of people around the world identify with a religion, yet intercultural education hardly even mentions religion. |



| 00:01:30 | Ishita | And it's crazy to say that you're interested in cultural difference, but then avoid the topic of religion or religious difference. |
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| | | Anyway, if you have not listened to part one, which is episode 51, <i>Culture and Religion: Starting Conversations</i> , you might want to check it out before listening to this one. |
| 00:01:54 | Joseph | And one point we were making is that religion is cultural. |
| 00:02:01 | Ishita | Religious communities are cultural communities and secular values are also cultural. |
| 00:02:07 | Joseph | And the other thing is, whether your society leans religious or secular, our individual values are cultural because the society you grow up in shapes your moral compass. |
| 00:02:21 | Ishita | And in this episode, we want to explore this connection between religion and culture some more. This time we look at the science and psychology behind moral intuitions - this feeling of right and wrong that guides our lives. |
| 00:02:39 | Joseph | And we will see that although moral dimensions such as caring or fairness or respect are shared all over the world, there is huge cultural and personal variation. |
| 00:02:53 | Ishita | And that means that cultural bridge people must navigate in and between these different worldviews. |
| 00:03:02 | Joseph | And that brings us to part one – It feels right to me |
| | | Part One – It feels right to me |
| | Joseph | So one of the reactions we get when we mention culture and religion is: "Well, that's a touchy topic". But it does raise a really basic question. Why is the topic of religion so touchy? |
| 00:03:35 | Ishita | And of course, there is no single or simple answer to that question. But one factor we can explore is what psychologists call moral intuitions. And this refers to our gut level feelings of right and wrong, fair and unfair, sacred and profane. |



| 00:03:57 | Joseph | We have talked about moral intuitions before, especially the work of Jonathan Haidt and Moral Foundations Theory. And that research tries to understand the cognitive functioning of these gut feelings of right and wrong. |
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| 00:04:13 | Ishita | And we call them intuitive because they are a feeling response to our experiences. So, for example, if you see a child treated cruelly, it simply feels wrong. You want to protect them. If someone insults you, you get angry, you want to fight back. And that's because in the end, we are social primates - on guard and defending ourselves. |
| 00:04:42 | Joseph | There's a great YouTube video of a TED talk by the primatologist Franz De Waal showing how a capuchin monkey becomes enraged when it receives a slice of cucumber instead of the grape that the other monkey got because it feels like it hasn't been treated fairly. |
| 00:05:02 | Ishita | But let's get back to humans. According to Moral Foundations theory, we have a gut response to five moral dimensions, and they relate to: a need to be caring, to be fair, to show respect, to be loyal, and to avoid impurity. And each of these has had survival value for human communities. |
| 00:05:31 | Joseph | So naturally, this is something that cuts across cultures. People everywhere have a sense for these different moral feelings - fairness, respect, kindness, loyalty, sanctity. |
| 00:05:45 | Ishita | But, and this is really important for us, our moral intuitions are deeply influenced by culture, by the particular worldview we grew up with. |
| 00:05:55 | Joseph | Because the worldview we're used to simply feels right to us in a really important way. Our moral intuitions make our reality, because it's hard to imagine the world feeling any different than it does to us. So if you feel God's loving presence in your life, then not having faith is simply unimaginable. |
| 00:06:23 | Ishita | And I totally get that. In India, for example, the feet simply are impure. The idol on the altar simply is sacred. |



| 00:06:36 | Joseph | And on the other hand, if the sacred doesn't feel real to you in that way, if the material world is the only world that you feel, then of course, religious faith can feel alien or naive or whatever. |
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| 00:06:50 | Ishita | And these feelings are deeply cultural. Is the body something that tempts us with impure urges? Or is it a beautiful expression of our self-worth? So let's bring this back to mental processes. In terms of cognition, religion and culture are deeply intertwined. And this is how it is explained in an article in the <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology</i> . And this will be read by podcast contributor Daniel Glinz, who will read this and other segments today |
| 00:07:32 | Daniel | "Religious traditions provide different answers to the question of how the self and one's relation to others are defined, and therefore provide a powerful basis to expect cross cultural differences in self-construal. Moreover, religious beliefs and institutions are thought to have had a lasting historical influence in shaping national cultures, which seemingly persists even in nations where a majority of the population is no longer religious." |
| 00:08:16 | Joseph | Let's pick that apart a bit. Religious traditions provide a foundation to our identity, how we manage our relationships with others. And also religious beliefs and values have a lasting impact on society. |
| 00:08:31 | Ishita | And so this takes us back to our main point, that our feelings of right and wrong, our worldviews, are highly cultural. |
| 00:08:43 | Joseph | But here's what I find really tricky. Our values and our worldview also depends on the individual, and we tend to experience them as completely personal. They might be cultural, but they are my values. |
| 00:09:00 | Ishita | That's true. I grew up in India surrounded by religion. I was born in a Hindu family, lived in and went to Catholic schools, enjoyed biryani and firni during Eid with my parents, Muslim colleagues. Religious values were part of everyday life, even though I simply did not share them personally. |



| 00:09:28 | Joseph | And how has that been for you? |
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| 00:09:30 | Ishita | It has not always been easy. On the one hand, religion was normal. I could sing in the church choir or cook for religious ceremonies in our family home. But on the other hand, I simply wasn't moved by chanting mantras and did not really feel a sense of community with other believers. |
| 00:09:54 | Joseph | Well, did that create inner conflict? |
| 00:09:58 | Ishita | As I grew up, it did. Who was I? What were my beliefs? But there was outer conflict too. Even today, it sometimes makes people question my moral character. If I don't believe in God, what kind of a woman am I? But how about you? You grew up in a religious family? |
| 00:10:23 | Joseph | Yes, I did. A Catholic family. I went to Catholic schools. My family went to Mass. Two uncles were Jesuit priests, an aunt and three of my sisters all entered the convent. So when I was growing up, it was normal to confess my sins to a priest, for example. I went through a religious confirmation as a teenager. I read the Scriptures in daily mass. |
| 00:10:48 | Ishita | But you didn't keep those values? |
| 00:10:51 | Joseph | No, I started to question them as a teenager. And there was a time when I would speak of God, but not of Catholic faith. But eventually I stopped doing that too. |
| 00:11:03 | Ishita | And did that create conflict? |
| 00:11:07 | Joseph | I do remember that when I was 17, I had a girlfriend whose family was Christian, and the pastor invited me to his office to ask me about my faith. He asked me if I accepted that the Bible was the word of God and that Jesus was my Lord and Savior. I told him that I didn't feel that the Bible was the only source of truth. He said: "Ah, you are a secular humanist", which was for him, I guess, a terrible thing - someone who puts human affairs above God. |
| 00:11:44 | Ishita | And was he correct? |



| 00:11:47 | Joseph | Well, I am secular. I don't believe in an afterlife or spirituality, and being a humanist for me means having concern for humanity. But that's my truth. And it was a challenge to his truth. Our moral intuitions simply did not match. |
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| 00:12:07 | Ishita | And it's hard to build bridges in a case like this. |
| 00:12:12 | Joseph | It is. And eventually that girlfriend did cut off contact with me, and I'm sure that, at least in part, it was because of pressure from her family and church community. No, it was really painful. |
| 00:12:26 | Ishita | I'm so sorry. Unfortunately, that's often the reality of navigating different worldviews, isn't it? |
| 00:12:34 | Joseph | Indeed. And that also brings us to part two – Different realities |
| | - | Part Two – Different Realities |
| 00:12:54 | Joseph | You know, Ishita, intercultural educators often talk about cultural difference, but it strikes me that differences in religious or secular worldviews feel somehow deeper than saying cultural difference. |
| 00:13:09 | Ishita | I know what you mean. It's not just valuing different things. It's like having to navigate different realities entirely, which isn't easy because we want to stick to our own moral compass, even as we recognize and respect the different moral realities of others. |
| 00:13:32 | Joseph | And this is something that podcast team member Sanne Bosma has been giving some thought to. Let's listen. |
| 00:13:41 | Sanne | When I am not confronted with religion, my secular worldview is there under the surface because I do not recite mantras every day stating that I do not believe in a God. I do not consciously practice particular traditions or rituals that would explicitly demonstrate a secular worldview. So, my secular worldview is quite fundamental, and in many ways, it feels as if it cannot be changed. Then again, I am quite convinced that the reason I have this secular worldview is greatly because of the country where I was born and the family I grew up in. |



| 00:14:30 | Ishita | I am impressed that Sanne reconciles two opposing ideas. On the one hand, she says that secularism is a deep part of her, but at the same time, she recognizes that even this deep aspect of her identity is shaped by culture. |
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| 00:14:52 | Joseph | Well, something like this created tension for me. When I was a young Catholic. I remember wondering, if I had been born in a different country, would I still be Christian? And of course, the opposite can happen. Being a believer can put you in the minority in a secular society. |
| 00:15:11 | Ishita | And we spoke to someone in a situation like that. We'll call her Emma. She has shared her experiences of faith in a secular society, but she prefers not to share her personal identity. So your good friend and musical collaborator, Liv Johanson, will read them. Let's take a listen. |
| 00:15:38 | Emma (Liv) | I grew up in a secular household in a region heavily influenced by Christianity. My family emphasized scientific thinking and universal respect with no religious practice. Ironically, my teenage rebellion took the form of attending church and youth services. During my young adult years, I balanced two worlds. Starting weekends at the church youth club and ending them downtown at nightclubs. I always stayed sober. My non-religious friends would introduce me as a Christian, but still cool. |
| 00:16:27 | Ishita | This idea of balancing two worlds really resonated with me. And having to follow your inner voice when people around you don't understand. |
| 00:16:41 | Joseph | Well, to hear someone say, oh, you're Christian but still cool. It sounds as though being Christian is a defect. And I bet that those friends thought that they were being nice. |
| 00:16:53 | Ishita | Well, there are so many places in the world where your religious identity is dominant and it's hard to go against the dominant values of a society. |



| 00:17:05 | Joseph | And this is something that podcast team member Emre Seven has thought about. He was raised in Turkey, where more than 90% of the population identifies as Muslim. |
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| 00:17:20 | Emre | I feel much closer to a secular view and style of life in which every single person does and must have a right to believe or not believe anything of their choice. Because of that, I don't talk about religion very much or very often, and I guess that shows that I do not feel comfortable with the topic. And I certainly try to keep the conversation on the very surface if somebody does bring it up. One thing that has a big impact on my hesitation and my discomfort talking about religion is that religion has been such a politicized phenomenon in Türkiye and probably in many other countries as well. |
| 00:18:11 | Ishita | Emre's discomfort hits close to home for me. Religion often is politicized. |
| 00:18:20 | Joseph | And I think it is worth taking a bit of a detour here. When we say religion is politicized, we mean that religious belief or practice becomes connected to political power and control. |
| 00:18:34 | Ishita | And that's tragic when it happens. Personally, I believe that religion can be a force for good in society. But using religion as a means to power is politics, not virtue. |
| 00:18:50 | Joseph | And all of this can drive moral outrage. |
| 00:18:54 | Ishita | That's definitely true in India. When politics and religion are mixed together, there is an increase in religious intolerance. For example, people who are killed for falling in love with someone from another faith. |
| 00:19:12 | Joseph | And I can only imagine that navigating questions of faith and worldview in those contexts can really be treacherous. |
| 00:19:21 | Ishita | I spoke to my good friend Safa. She is an educator. Her Muslim faith is extremely important to her, and yet she has had to find her own religious paths. I started by asking her about her religious identity. |



| 00:19:43 | Safa | I have no idea how you would define the person I am. I grew up with a mix of religion and secularism. Honestly, I didn't know that there was another way until my last Quran teacher entered my life. Most of my early religious education was thanks to my uncle, who's a devout Muslim. He has a library, translations of the Quran, the Hadiths - that is stories from the life of the Prophet - and a whole lot of other resources. He and my grandfather would tell me stories about what the Prophet did and what the Quran says. I definitely am a believer, but I'm not religious. To give you some perspective, I don't follow the basic tenets of Islam most of the time. That is, I may not pray five times a day, even when I want to. But my day doesn't start without a bismillah, and I don't sleep without a prayer. So for me, my religion is a personal relationship with my creator. I would call it my faith more than religion. |
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| 00:21:07 | Joseph | Wow. There is so much to unpack there. |
| 00:21:11 | Ishita | It always moves me how Safa reconciles different truths within herself. She says that she's a believer, but she's not religious, and she embraces both secular and religious values. |
| 00:21:28 | Joseph | Well, I don't know Safa or her situation, but it feels to me like there can be a lot of tension between these different truths, and that's something that you know firsthand. |
| 00:21:39 | Ishita | As I grew older, there was tension that I had to reconcile. I participated less and less in religious events, questioned religious norms. I moved away from my family for a job, and I lived alone as a single professional woman. And all of that gradually put me in a kind of moral grey zone. |
| 00:22:05 | Joseph | Well, how does that feel for you now? |
| 00:22:09 | Ishita | It's like we've been saying. It requires holding on to different truths. People that love me may also question my morality. |
| 00:22:20 | Joseph | By attempting to bring together different truths, you can open yourself up to attack. And that is something that Emma has experience with. Let's take a listen. |



| 00:22:33 | Emma (Liv) | At a work gathering, I was verbally attacked by a coworker's boyfriend. Within minutes of meeting him, he launched into a tirade about Christian judgmentalism, quoting Bible verses and demanding responses from me. Despite my attempt to apologize for his negative experiences, he just kept on going. I left early. During a social gathering, a person became confrontational about Christianity and LGBTQ+ rights. She insisted that all Christians, including me, have deep seated hatred for the LGBTQ+ community. Having had countless similar conversations before, I no longer have the emotional capacity to defend myself against assumptions about my beliefs. |
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| 00:23:37 | Joseph | Well, it's painful to hear that Emma has had to live through these experiences and it's also a reminder that a secular worldview does not prevent people from being intolerant. |
| 00:23:50 | Ishita | No, intolerance can be rooted in any form of ideology. In this case, Emma is paying a price for a religious worldview in a secular society. |
| 00:24:03 | Joseph | And unfortunately this intolerance can run in both directions. |
| 00:24:10 | Emma (Liv) | When a well-known pastor publicly declared yoga as demonic, I found myself expected to answer for these statements. Individual Christian opinions often lead to all Christians being asked to defend or explain these positions. Because I've been caught in the middle so much, I've developed different communication strategies. Avoiding religious discussions with family, speaking about faith only when asked by non-Christian friends, and recognizing the subtle Christian language used among believers to assess each other's beliefs. |
| 00:25:00 | Joseph | It just breaks my heart to hear how Emma has been attacked from both sides. And as she says, she's had to develop self-protection strategies after being caught in the middle so much. |



| 00:25:11 | Ishita | We have this image of the so-called global citizen as a cosmopolitan thing. But for so many people in the world, being a bridge person is really hard. You expose yourself, you may be attacked. And I think that if you are a woman, those burdens can be especially heavy. |
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| 00:25:35 | Joseph | And this is something that Safa speaks about as well. Let's listen. |
| 00:25:41 | Safa | Since I was a kid, I hated how Muslims treated women. There was a time when my Quran teacher told us in class that girls should not be seen or heard. Then he added that the Prophet said that women should stay at home. I don't know what got into me. I just said: "Yeah, that's because he's a man." And then everyone in my family went crazy. They took it to mean that I was abusing the Prophet. I wasn't. I was stating that he could only see it through his eyes and not the eyes of a woman. Then I met someone wonderful and he asked me to read the Quran instead of listening to people. And then I learned so much about respect for women. Later, when I heard the actual story from the Hadith - stories from the life of the Prophet - it wasn't the way the other teacher had told me. It has always been a struggle. For example, deciding not to get married. I had to stop going for congregational prayers because everyone would look at me like I was a sinner. Or deciding to work without any help from family, or deciding to study. Every step has been a fight. There was a time when I thought my religion was a deterrent to my growth. But when I decided not to listen, I realized it wasn't religion. It was stupid bearded men. |
| 00:27:37 | Ishita | Hearing Safa's experiences brings tears to my eyes. The price she has paid as a woman and as a human being for moving between different truths. She inspires me. It takes courage and love to do what she does. |
| 00:27:58 | Joseph | And that brings us to part three - Beauty and the Beast. |
| | 1 | Part Three – Beauty and the Beast |
| 00:28:17 | Joseph | So, Ishita, we talked about moral intuitions and why religion and worldviews can be so powerful. And we've heard these incredible stories from people who navigate these competing truths. And I |



| | | think that one thread that runs through all of this is a kind of 'beauty and the beast quality' of these experiences. |
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| 00:28:41 | Ishita | Moral feelings do bring out the best and the worst in us. |
| 00:28:47 | Joseph | And let's reflect for a moment on why that is. Moral intuitions touch us in three areas that I think have this 'beauty and the beast quality'. And we could call them virtue, sanctity, and community. |
| 00:29:06 | Ishita | So, first of all, it feels good to connect to a higher sense of virtue, to be caring, to be fair. And on the other hand, we deeply resist cruelty and unfairness. We are offended by it. |
| 00:29:23 | Joseph | And sanctity has this 'beauty and the beast quality too'. To experience the sacred is transcendent. It connects us to something beyond ourselves, whether that is spiritual or mystical or religious or simply, a larger purpose. |
| 00:29:41 | Ishita | But the opposite of sanctity, when people are debased, self-indulgent, unclean, that disgusts us. |
| 00:29:52 | Joseph | And community also has this 'beauty and the beast quality'. When we feel connected to a larger caring community, we become selfless. We give for the greater good. But when we're outcast, or when we blindly promote our community as better, we can really fall prey to some of humankind's ugliest urges. |
| 00:30:15 | Ishita | And all of this put podcast contributor Daniel Glinz in mind of Salman Rushdie, who has been forced to reflect on religious intolerance. His book the <i>Satanic Verses</i> provoked a fatwa, an Islamic religious ruling against him in 1989, which forced him into hiding and eventually led to an attack on his life in 2022. This is a quote from his book <i>Knife</i> , which he wrote after barely surviving the ordeal. |
| 00:30:57 | Daniel | "I have never felt the need for religious faith to help me comprehend and deal with the world. However, I understand that for many people, religion provides a moral anchor and seems essential. And in my view, the private faith of anyone is nobody's business except that of the individual concerned. I have |



| | | no issue with religion when it occupies this private space and doesn't seek to impose its values on others. But when religion becomes politicized, even weaponized, then it's everybody's business because of its capacity for harm." |
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| 00:31:44 | Joseph | Even after all of that, he's not anti-religion. He's simply against religion being weaponized. And it can be weaponized for the same reason that it can be such a force for transcendent good. It taps into very deep parts of the self. |
| 00:32:02 | Ishita | Well, for today, let's not focus so much on the beast, on the worst of human nature. Let's look for beauty in our moral intuitions. And I think that we can find inspiration in the many people like Safa, who go beyond the dichotomies that divide us. |
| 00:32:23 | Joseph | I've also found inspiration in David Brooks. He's a columnist for the New York Times, and he's highly committed to humanitarian concerns. But in his writing we also learn that he was a longtime agnostic who over time found faith through different experiences of transcendence. And this is an excerpt from a column he wrote called the <i>Shock of Faith</i> . |
| 00:32:51 | Daniel | "One morning in April, I was in a crowded subway car underneath 33rd street and 8th Avenue in New York. Truly one of the ugliest spots on this good green earth. I looked around the car and I had this shimmering awareness that all the people in it had souls. Each of them had some piece of themselves that had no size, color, weight or shape, but that gave them infinite value. The souls around me that day seemed not inert but yearning, some soaring, some suffering, or sleeping somewhere downtrodden and crying out. It hit me with the force of joy. Happiness is what we experience as we celebrate the achievements of the self. Winning a prize. Joy is what we feel when we are encompassed by a presence that transcends the self. We create happiness, but are seized by joy. In my case by the sensation that I had just been overwhelmed by a set of values of intoxicating spiritual beauty." |
| 00:34:17 | Ishita | I love his distinction between happiness and joy, with joy relating to this transcendent experience of focusing on the wellbeing of others. |



| 00:34:30 | Joseph | And I love his turn of phrase, intoxicating spiritual beauty. And he's experiencing that through an awareness of the value of each human being. This is for him a deeply spiritual experience, but it's also a very humanistic experience. |
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| 00:34:49 | Ishita | Thank you, for finding and sharing this. And as an Indian, I'd like to share two sources of inspiration from my country that I think show us different paths to the same goal. One is the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, and the other is a poet and educator Rabindranath Tagore. |
| 00:35:14 | Joseph | Well, there's a very famous quote by Gandhi that I think many interculturalists will have heard. Let's take a listen. |
| 00:35:25 | Daniel | "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any." |
| 00:35:52 | Ishita | When we listen to this quote, we need to remember that Gandhi was deeply religious. His vision of social justice and equality was a religious vision. And he called on people to live up to their highest religious and spiritual ideals. Here's a brief clip of Gandhi speaking of humanity in spiritual terms. Let's listen. |
| 00:36:24 | Mahatma Gandhi | "There is an indefinable, mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses." |
| 00:37:00 | Ishita | That might have been a bit hard to catch for many listeners. But Gandhi talks about a mysterious power that pervades everything that is beyond explanation and that transcends the senses. |
| 00:37:16 | Lia | And that's essentially a spiritual view of humanity, that there are forces beyond the material world of the senses that we must answer to. |



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| 00:37:25 | Ishita | And this was a point of disagreement with Tagore. Tagore was from a Hindu family and a proud Bengali, and he believed in greater spiritual truths. But he ultimately was a humanist first, and a religionist second. |
| 00:37:49 | Joseph | Well, Tagore was many things, wasn't he? A poet, a singer, a writer. He won the Nobel Prize in literature. But he was also a reformer, an educator, an intellectual. But as I understand it, he wasn't a religious figure in the same way that Gandhi was. |
| 00:38:07 | Ishita | Well, he was spiritual, deeply influenced by religious texts like the Vedas and the Upanishads. But I wouldn't call him a spiritual leader. And his humanitarian view was an inspiration for me growing up. I grew up singing his songs and reading his poems. |
| 00:38:32 | Joseph | And let's just hear a bit of him singing |
| | (Aud | io Clip: Rabindranath Tagore singing in Bengali) |
| 00:39:09 | Ishita | This particular song is called "Amaro poraano loye ki khela |
| | | khelabe ogo poraano priyo" - Which means something like, "How are you going to play with my heart, O beloved?" Like many of his songs, it can be interpreted both as an offering to the Almighty, but also as an ode to the beloved. |
| 00:39:36 | Joseph | And this sounds quite different from Gandhi. Gandhi's worldview was rooted in religion, but Tagore's vision seems more rationalist. |
| 00:39:45 | Ishita | Yes. For example, Gandhi might have seen a natural disaster as something with supernatural significance, whereas Tagore deeply resisted that idea. But, they also respected each other and found common cause. And this is what I find inspiring. |
| 00:40:07 | Joseph | And that's a good thing to remember. We can find common cause and the different truths that we navigate do not have to divide us. |
| 00:40:16 | Ishita | But for that to happen, we need to understand where the other person is coming from. |
| 00:40:23 | Joseph | Well, one thing that has struck me as we have worked on these episodes may be obvious, but religion is not a single thing. Each |



| | | individual has different experiences, each religious community finds different answers to life's big questions. And because I have a very secular outlook, it's been really good to explore that diversity a little bit. |
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| 00:40:49 | Ishita | And by the same token, secularism or rationalism or whatever you want to call it is not a single thing. There are rich traditions of humanism, philosophy, non-religious seeking. And we really can't sweep these things under the carpet, so to speak. We don't have to agree with other worldviews to learn about them. |
| 00:41:16 | Joseph | And conversations about religion and culture can help us see this diversity. Well, on that note, I think that's about as far as we can take this topic in this two-part episode. |
| 00:41:29 | Ishita | Well, I wasn't always comfortable sharing my experiences, and maybe you weren't either, but it was incredibly inspiring to hear everyone's stories. |
| 00:41:45 | Joseph | So finally, let's share our sources and some resources. You can learn more about Moral Foundation theory from Jonathan Haidt's book the Righteous Mind, or for a more scholarly work, see the article by Jesse Graham and others, Moral Foundations Theory the Pragmatic Validity of Moral Pluralism. You can find Franz de Waal's TED Talk with the Capuchin monkey getting Cucumber instead of a grape on YouTube. You can search for "Two monkeys were paid unequally". The quote about the connection between religion and culture came from the article Beyond the East West Dichotomy Global Variation in Cultural Models of Selfhood published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology by Vivian Vignoles and Eleanor Oweh and others. The David Brooks quote was from his column The Shock of Faith, published by the New York Times. You can find the clip of Gandhi speaking on YouTube. The title is Mahatma Gandhi's speech Gandhi on God Truth Eclectic. And you can find the Tagore song |



| | | by looking for the Voice of Rabindranath collection of songs and recitations by Tagore himself. And you can find an article about the friendship and disagreement of Gandhi and Tagore in When Gandhi First Met Tagore in the Indian Express. The Deep Culture podcast is sponsored by the Japan Intercultural Institute, an NPO dedicated to intercultural education and research. I'm the director of JII. If you like today's episode, do us a favor. Leave a comment on our Apple Podcasts. Share this on social media or write us at dcpodcastsjapanintercultural.org so many people contributed to this episode. A very special thank you to Safa Abdul Razak for showing us her different worlds of truth, and also to Emma who has shared such moving experiences. Thanks to Daniel Glintz for suggesting the Rushdie quote and sharing his vocal talents. And of course, thanks to podcast team members Emre Seven and Sanne Bosma for their experiences and insights, as well as team member Lia Torhild Liane Harr Skarnes. Thanks as always to our sound engineer Robinson Fritz, JII's administrator Ikumi Fritz, and everyone at JII. And finally, thanks to you Ishita for all that you shared. I really, really enjoyed working on this episode with you. |
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| 00:44:16 | Ishita | Thank you, Joseph. I am deeply grateful to be able to do this meaningful work with you. |