



Climate Changed Podcast Discussion Guide **Season 2, Episode 6**

Guest: Shanon Shah

Title: *What Roles Can Religions Play?*

Welcoming Activity

Our podcast hosts, Ben Yosua-Davis and Nicole Diroff, begin this episode by asking each other about an experience that drew them away from the comfort of their own cultural contexts and what it taught them. Take a moment to consider the following two questions: What was an experience that took you out of your home cultural context? And what did it teach you? Then allow each person in the group an opportunity to respond with whatever amount of detail they are willing to share.

Introduction To Episode

In this episode, Nicole Diroff speaks with Shanon Shah, who is a practicing Muslim from Malaysia, a queer man, and a sociologist of religion. They discuss the work that Shanon engages in as Director of Faith for the Climate, a U.K.-based space for people of faith to gather and find support as they work on climate change. He explains why he believes that the concept of power is necessary in conversations about climate, especially among religious and spiritual communities.

Discussion Questions

1. At the start of their conversation, Nicole asks Shanon to describe the world that he feels Faith for the Climate is working for — even fighting for. How do you describe the world that you are working towards?
2. Shanon claims that the conversations about power are missing in groups working on climate change. Do you agree or disagree? What are some ways that the understanding and application of power can benefit those who advocate for climate action?
3. Amitav Ghosh claims that religion is a place of possibility, a way of living beyond what he calls the “securitization and corporatization of climate change,” or the use of climate change to normalize oppressive systems. What are some examples of how religion or spirituality can challenge or move beyond these threats?
4. Are interreligious conversations something that you experience often in your life? What value does such dialogue offer, whether in regards to climate and environment or in general?
5. Ben comments on how much of the Christian scriptures Shanon, a practicing Muslim, introduces into this conversation with Nicole. He calls it a “beautiful invitation” to return

into the “soil of our lineage” where we can find meaningful resources. This lineage might be religious, ancestral, cultural, traditional, and so on. What resources or wisdom does your own soil of lineage offer?

Closing Activity

Shanon reads the Prophet’s Prayer, which he learned from a Muslim friend of the Shia tradition. Ask for a volunteer to read this prayer aloud, or read as a group:

Oh, God, give bliss to the people of the graves, enrich every poor person, provide for every hungry person, clothe every naked person, help every debtor pay his or her debts, relieve every distressed person, return every exiled person, free every slave and prisoner. Oh, God, correct every wrong in the affairs of those who believe and cure every sick person, cure all of our deficiencies with your prosperity, and transform our bad state to the beauty of your state.

Remember that Shanon mentions how, although there is no explicit naming of climate change or the environment in the prayer, it relates so closely to these things. As a group, discuss the ways that this prayer speaks to the realities of a climate-changed world.