DarkHorse Podcast with Irshad Manji & Bret Weinstein (192kbi...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Irshad Manji

**Bret** 00:03

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast I have the distinct pleasure of sitting today with earshot Manji. She is at Oxford lecturing for the initiative for global ethics and human rights. She is founder of the moral courage project, and author of several books, including the most recent don't label me how to do diversity without inflaming the culture words, your shot. Welcome to Dark Horse.

**Irshad Manji** 00:28

I'm so thrilled to be here, Brad, thanks.

**Bret** 00:30

So tell me you've written a book, don't label me how to do diversity without inflaming the culture wars. What fun would it be if we didn't inflame the culture wars?

**Irshad Manji** 00:42

Yeah, it is fun, isn't it for about five seconds. And then, you know, the dopamine hit wears off, and we continue to crave it, and we continue to chase it. And then we wind up in, in a in a bit, sort of an ideologically zealous abyss that really is no fun for anybody. I don't know about you, I will tell you, I am not missing the noise of the Trump administration. I love the fact that we're actually talking about issues, not about his behavior. And I can honestly tell you, that whenever there are stories that pop up in my feeds about him, I have zero desire to read them. I really, because I feel like saying, you remember what Melania Trump was wearing on the back of her jacket when she you know, went to see the Mexican kids? You know, I don't really care, do you? That's how I feel about continuing to remain mired in the noise. Well, I want to move on.

**Bret** 01:53

I, I hate to disagree with you so early in our discussion. I think it's best that we just confront the question. All right. I feel a lot calmer, without the noise of Trump and paying attention to his every word and misunderstanding and looking for dog whistles everywhere. But I have the sense that we now have an administration that has high production values, and it knows how to give the impression of things being under control. And frankly, I don't think it knows what it's doing. I think it is playing with fire, especially with respect to things like the culture wars, there are certain areas where it is clearly preferable to the approach of the Trump administration. But I don't have the sense that we are in good hands. And I do have the sense that most of the people that I talked to have breathed the sigh of relief, and that is going to leave the foxes in charge of the hen house without anyone even paying attention to what's happening to the birds.

**Irshad Manji** 03:05

Yeah. And you know, Brett, I think we may be having a heated agreement here. I don't disagree with you at all about this. And I certainly did not mean to suggest that, you know, all is well in America lead now. Not at all. What I simply wanted to convey was that, you know, the the fun of mudslinging wears off quickly. And now it's time to scrutinize, you know, what this Biden administration Biden, Harris administration is doing. And I have to tell you, I do think that, particularly on the Harris side, we are going to get an inflaming of the culture wars. I don't trust that she appreciates how diverse this country is. And by diverse I mean, diversity of viewpoint, not just diversity of demographics. I think that she is an opportunist she has shown herself to be and that she will curry favor with any anybody in the progressive camp who wants to inflame the culture wars. So we're not out of the woods by any stretch. But it's just now we can begin talking details rather than merely commenting on Trump's latest outreach.

**Bret** 04:40

Yes, I feel like we are in the woods having been pumped full of value them so that we're not even aware that there might be, you know, things that we need to pay attention to. Now I regard Harris as a perfectly cynical entity who will do anything that advances her cause and I regard Biden a little bit differently, I see him as sort of plank tonically, corrupt, that he's been carried along with the culture of corruption of the Democratic Party for the better part of his career, and that he has now landed in this position of tremendous power. And he's still behaving in a planktonic fashion. That is to say he's going the direction that the winds blow on on his side of the aisle. And what I meant to imply, as I said that we were disagreeing and you challenged me and said, We are in heated agreement, which I also think is likely is that the the day that Donald Trump was elected, and everybody was in shock, I had the feeling I had a bizarre feeling of relief, not at his election, because I wasn't relieved at that, though, I would have been terrified in a different way if Hillary Clinton had been elected. But I had the sense that suddenly, an entire class of people was wide awake for the first time in recent memory, that the election of Donald Trump was so far outside of what was expected that all kinds of people who are not aware of how dangerous to political machines have become, especially on the blue team, we're processing information directly for the first time and trying to understand what planet they were living on. And that that was a very healthy phenomenon. Now, I think it degraded into something over the course of the Trump administration, that was very unhealthy. But being awake is a prerequisite to figuring out how we lost the thread and how we can possibly return to rational governance. And I am now troubled by watching people return to a kind of complacency because what's on the news is now, so familiar looking that it seems like somebody must be in charge, when in fact, I don't think that's even remotely the case.

**Irshad Manji** 07:00

So I want to pick up on your point about who if anybody is in charge, but let me rewind for a second. You know, in a sense, I hold myself accountable, miniscule way, I'm one person, but I remember, I was teaching at New York University back in 2009. And it was during that time, that I undertook a fairly extensive tour of the Heartland. And with my first book, The trouble with Islam

**Bret** 07:38

today, when you say Heartland, you mean the American Heartland, the American Heartland, excuse me, come. But just to be just to be clear, you live in Canada at the moment? No, I'm sorry. I must read that.

**Irshad Manji** 07:52

I'm a citizen of Canada. But I have lived and work in the United States for almost 15 years now. And so at this time, I was teaching at NYU, and I undertook, as I say, this tour of the American heartland with with my book, my first book about the need for reforming Islam. And I was

**Bret** 08:12

your first book, sorry, your first book is called The trouble with Islam today. Is that correct?

**Irshad Manji** 08:17

Correct. That's right. And I speak as a Muslim in writing that book, The subtitle is a Muslims call for reform in her faith. I was I was surprised. I didn't know what to do with the fact that at various turns in that tour, I would hear the question. Why do they hate us? But here's the thing, Brett, the people asking that question, we're not asking about why Muslims hate Americans. They were asking, Why do East Coast people hate us in the heartland? And when I got back to NYU, I sat down with the Dean of my department, and I he at the time, and he asked me. So what was it like, how much Islamophobia did you have to ward off? I said to him, none that I was able to notice. Notice he didn't say, Did you encounter Islamophobia? No. How much did you encounter? Right? And that was, you know, it's just such an affirmation of what I was hearing from people in the heartland, the frankly humiliation to which they've been subjected by the overly educated, who are really in so many ways under educated you know, for the last 2030 years, and so on. I've long understood where, you know the the resentment the cultural grievance has come from. And I'm the first to say, they're not all racists. The more the more we fall into that trap, now that the familiar ethos of a Biden Harris administration, you know, is, is is back in play, the more we fall into that trap, the more we create the very thing that we say, we oppose.

**Bret** 10:42

I agree we are going to we are going to resurrect racism by virtue of falsely demonizing people claiming that they have it when in fact, it isn't in their minds, which doesn't mean that they don't have ignorance, right? There is ubiquitous ignorance, we are all ignorant of the experience of people who come from different places, but that ignorance unless it is willful, doesn't cross over into what we ought to be calling

**Irshad Manji** 11:09

race. Exactly, exactly. The real crime. If I may say it's not ignorance, it's in curiosity, a lack of curiosity

**Bret** 11:17

Very well said yes, that's that's the thing. And the fact is your your experience that you describe of a not experiencing Islamophobia, yourself as a Muslim, be not encountering racism that, you know, the blue team swears is lurking in every white mind. This is very similar to my experience, I'm I come from a now nearly dead tradition of left intellectuals. And as I have been rejected by people who are nominally on my side of the political spectrum, and I have traveled extensively amongst the people who are accused of racism so regularly, they're told they live in flyover states that they're deplorable. It is amazing how infrequently one runs into anything that you would actually apply the label racism to. And it is also interesting how many of the values that in in my very progressive household, the one in which I grew up, the vet, those values are now being defended by many on the center right in a way that I never expected to see. But unless you travel across the lines, that we are told, You needn't bother with, you don't discover that the story about the others is simply false.

**Irshad Manji** 12:44

You know, this is the great tragedy of labels. It's not the fact that labels themselves are inaccurate. After all, you can label me a Muslim, and you would be right. You could label me a woman and you would be right. It's the baggage, the assumptions that go with those labels. And I'm, I'm constantly struggling with how we are going to move beyond those assumptions. In a time in which we all live. We are immersed in the kinds of technologies that, frankly, don't incentivize the kind of thing we're doing right now. Openly engaging, right? immersed in technologies that are deliberately designed to amp up our emotions. And from a you're the first person to recognize this being an evolutionary biologist. From a biological perspective, the easiest emotion to have is fear.

**Bret** 13:44

Yes, I think that's literally right. And not because of it is a cognitive bias built into us because of effectively the same logic that results in your fire alarm going off when you burn toast, which is a fire alarm that goes off for burnt toast can still save your life one that assumes that a lot of smoke is toast related, may miss an actual fire and you may get trapped by it. So your your fight or flight reflex is built to be oversensitive. And to the extent that there are algorithmic reasons to trigger it because it gets you very engaged. You know, and that serves someone's economic interest. It causes us all to be jerked around when you know I mean, if let's put it this way, you you describe yourself as being interested in navigating correctly navigating issues of what we might otherwise call Diversity, Equity and Inclusion without involve in without getting involved in what we recognize as the culture war. You are not absolutely alone in the squadron you are. You are friends with Chloe, Valerie, so she's a mutual friend of ours. And I would say that you are both you interested in figuring out, you know, sorting the wheat from the chaff in this area, rather than just pretending that there is no issue of diversity, equity and inclusion. Right. And, you know, I share that belief with you there is something to be navigated. And unfortunately, both polls are wrong about it. It's not that we don't have a problem, right. But it is also not that, you know, white supremacy is ubiquitous in in America and the West, and it has to be stamped out along with patriarchy, and all of those false assertions.

**Irshad Manji** 15:33

I have to Yeah, well, I, you know, this the constant refrain of white supremacy. It's so sad for all kinds of reasons. But one of the big reasons for me is that, first of all, you know, my family are refugees from Uganda, in East Africa, we were booted out by a black man, EDM men who decided that Africa belongs only to blacks. Well, guess what, folks, my family had been in Uganda for three generations. We did not know any other country, we did not have a passport to India, or a passport to Britain, Uganda was our country. But you know, the the the very legitimate aspiration to liberation in the various African colonies devolved as aspirations often do into a fever, called Pan africanism. And that is when you get the dogma. And dogma, by definition is exclusionary. So no wonder that, you know, a military dictator could tell other people of color, you do not belong here. And part of what is so frustrating for somebody who has been born in a completely different segment of the world, coming to the United States, is that even those who decry Western imperialism, or who, you know, castigate others for, quote, centering whiteness, they themselves don't recognize that these impulses to exclude are human. They are endemically human. And that if you're going to go around, preaching to others, to check their bias, the question becomes, what bias of yours? Are you checking? role model that show that? And that's, again, not what we see. So in a way, right? I feel like this whole cultural moment, sort of focusing on diversity, equity, inclusion, and the like, is missing something huge, a huge opportunity. And the opportunity is this right now. It's as if there are two rival teams on the field, one used to wear the jersey called powerful and the other used to wear the uniform, labeled powerless. Now those jerseys are being swiped, swapped out, okay, they're being traded. But you have the same game. We have the opportunity right now to change the US against them gain through diversity, equity and inclusion. And that is not what we are doing. We're replicating the game,

**Bret** 18:42

right? We are replicating the game. It's not as if this isn't a known pattern. I mean, I sort of right feel like there are places where the right lesson is encoded, right? There are things you will find in Orwell that are absolutely central to our moment, you know, the who covered this particular one, meet the new boss, same as the old boss. And the idea is, we have this tendency to valorize the oppressed, which is understandable. But the problem is, your point is exactly right. There is a quadrant of human nature that acts in a particular way based on its opportunities once it gains power. And so to the extent that we view the oppressed as more deserving, they may be more deserving. But at the point that you transfer who's powerful to them, they behave in the same ways because guess what, this had nothing to do with their particular genes, creating particular defects of cognition. This has to do with game theory, the powerful tend to behave this way unless you build systems in which it doesn't pay. If you build those systems, we can behave much better. And many of us have seen that world we have lived in these circumstances where frankly, race has been sidelined, and we've seen how well it works. And it's very frustrating to have The functional world that we might live in prototyped, all around the landscape. But when it comes time to say, actually, here's how we ought to structure things. So that race is not a dominant predictor of your well being, for example, we end up shouted down by those who are playing a game that whether they are cynical, the game is cynical, right? It is about actually leveraging power in order to get limited resources, you know, making hay while the sun shines. And this is, you know, this was a disaster 100 years ago, but it's actually an existential threat now, because if you play that game, in a world where people are as thoroughly armed as they are, and in which these tendencies are so amplified by technologies that we did not evolve with, this is going to result in this being a very short ride. So we have a limited amount of time to fix this. It's not like, you know, we can go through another couple genocides, and then figure it out, actually, the time is now.

**Irshad Manji** 21:00

Right. Right. It's so interesting. I wanted to pick up on something you just said about how, you know, we've, we've seen where this can lead, right? I have a very good friend who wrote a fantastic piece about the resegregation that is happening in various schools across the country, to kids, you know, third and fourth graders being sort of divided up physically divided up in sort of the white quadrant to the, you know, black quadrant, the bipoc, quadrant, etc, etc. And one of the people who advocates this kind of thing is was the bridesmaid to the friend who wrote about who wrote scathingly about this, and one of my friends saw that her former bridesmaid was on board with this divvying up of kids. She asked her former bridesmaid what gives What happened? And the educator who, you know, advocates this kind of resegregation said, Well, I'm proud to be working at a school that is willing to try new things

**Bret** 22:19

to try old things really try is,

**Irshad Manji** 22:22

how does it not occur to her that we did try this? And it was bad. How does an educator not realize that this is not a new thing? It's an old thing. Yes. Tell me how that happens, Brett.

**Bret** 22:40

Well, I wish I knew. And you know, of course, I rather famously lived this exact phenomenon. As I watched my college, embrace segregation. I did the obvious thing, which was to point out that this wasn't a good idea. And I became, you know, the sort of symbol for white supremacy on my campus, because I was against segregation. I mean, that that is such a bizarre experience to go through, right? If you had told me at 35, that that was going to happen to me, you know, on the cusp of 50. Right, that I was going to be demonized as a racist for fighting segregation. I would have thought you completely bonkers, right? Likewise, if you had told me 10 years ago, that we would be having a fight over whether or not there was a sexual binary that was supported by scientific evidence. I mean, this couldn't possibly be a more secure conclusion has nothing to do with humans that goes back 500 million years in our lineage alone, right? How could we possibly find ourselves fighting over that? Or the idea that in mathematics, we will be fighting over whether or not two plus two indeed equals four in some fundamental way? Like, how did we allow the very basic rules for memory or extrapolation to be taken from us?

**Irshad Manji** 24:11

So now, let me ask a kind of a provocative question. Okay, to the both of us. And I, myself don't yet have an answer by literally because the question is this. What are we missing? What are you and I are not getting? that so many others get? I'd really, I'm very open to exploring this,

**Bret** 24:38

though. So let me say, I want to be careful because I feel like there are certain things that we could say almost for sure. Okay. We're missing 90% of the story. You and me, are that that's because we're doing well, right. The fact that you know, we might be getting 10% of it is is par for the course actually that Doesn't mean that the object that sounds like the one you're describing, actually exists because I don't think we are missing it. I think the point is, we have been invited to a game that were we to say, you know what, we're probably powerless to stop the game. So we might as well play to win, right? If you want it to win the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion game, so that at the point that it collapses, which I would argue is absolutely inevitable. When that game collapses, you know, you could have three homes, maybe if you played your cards, right, right. And so the question is not what are we missing? The question is, why would we fail to play the game, when the alternative is to effectively play Cassandra, and to warn of something that's coming and have it not create the impact that could prevent it?

**Irshad Manji** 26:02

Well, in part, I know why I refuse to play by the rules of the game. One of the reasons there are many, but one of the reasons I refuse to play by the rules is that, as I mentioned, you know, my family and I are refugees to this part of the world. And I can say, without a shadow of a doubt, that it has been our good fortune to wind up here. Every morning, before I pull my sorry, butt out of bed, I think, God, I am a person of faith. I thank God that, you know, we wound up in a part of the world where as somebody with all of my labels, as somebody who nonetheless, has been given the opportunities, and has recognized recognize them as opportunities, and has taken the opportunities to develop a voice and to become something of a thought leader. I, I really believe Brett that most people in our society have those opportunities. I see how, you know, students of color, for example, in urban centers, where I've I've taught are being pumped with the narrative, that not only are they victims, but now quite apart from their skin color. Now, they are also along with white kids fragile. So that even being exposed to a different perspective, one that challenges, the narrative that they're being, you know, filled with is harming them. And a lot of these kids actually don't feel harm. But they're thinking to themselves, well, if I'm supposed to be harmed, then I guess I better act that way. Because that's what's expected of me. So we're creating these false divisions and intentions. And for what, for the adults to build stature upon this pile of falsifications.

**Bret** 28:48

I agree with a lot that you said, I want to make sure to go back to the beginning of it, because I think the central point may be this one. So if the question is why, given that we could play the game to win, and so many seem to be doing it? Why would we take the risk of not playing that game? And your initial answer was that you know how lucky you are? I would say this matches my experience. Exactly. On my worst day. I know how lucky I am, right? This is the good fortune of these opportunities, is almost impossible to overstate even as dire as I think our global situation is and as concerned as I am, that my children may see civilization come apart. I know that we know that effectively. Even people of modest means at the moment, live like kings at the level of their, their somatic well being and that therefore the sense of privation is largely a trick of the mind. And in fact, I think I know exactly what trick of the mind it is. evolutionarily speaking, one finds opportunity if they feel that they are jeopardized or being shortchanged by the world. So no matter how lucky you are, you are wired to be dissatisfied. And therefore to figure out what opportunities may be lurking that you hadn't noticed before. And that natural tendency not to feel you know, you can feel satisfied temporarily. That's a reward for having discovered some patch of goodness. But you can't be stable IE satisfied or you will be demotivated. And so selection is programmed us to be easily dissatisfied. And our culture has taken ruthless advantage of this because advertisers the way they motivate you to spend money that you would not otherwise spend, or to spend it in ways that you would not otherwise spend it is to cause you is essentially to tell you something's wrong. And we have the solution to it. And whether that's a deodorant, or a car, or a new phone, whatever it may be, the idea is they have to create dissatisfaction in order to get your money. And so effectively from the moment we get up in the morning, the moment we go to bed at night, we are being bombarded by messages that say you could be better, right? You could be happier, you could be more satisfied. And here's the way to do it. And I think frankly, it's created a an epidemic of dissatisfaction which then functions almost like greed. And so maybe this is a long way of saying that I think you're identifying, feeling lucky as the reason that you refuse to play a game that you could probably be excellent at that would be very rewarding. Financially, I think I wonder if we were to look at all of the people who appear to be refusing to play that game, whether we would find gratitude disproportionately represented there.

**Irshad Manji** 32:02

Hmm, very interesting. I see. So I know, I'm lucky. It was through no doing of my own. That, you know, I was and along with my family, of course, expelled to a materially wealthier part of the world. When we arrived in the country, Canada, I'm talking about, you know, we were given our winter coats, along with some temporary housing. And I'd like to say having fled Civil War, that at one in the same time, we got peace and fleece, you know, if that is not lucky, I don't know what is. And yet, what was not lucky, I don't think but you tell me is that? You know, I went to a public school, where questions were, were encouraged, where I was not penalized for asking questions, when where I was penalized for asking questions was my Islamic religious school, and I got booted out at the age of 14. And because my mother was smart enough to not order me to go back and beg for forgiveness, since you know, what was I to be forgiven for being curious. But because of her, you know, sort of calm and rationality around all of this, she asked me, by the way, now that you're no longer welcome there every Saturday, what are you going to do with all that time, and she said, I want you to be thoughtful about it. That vote of confidence, made me want to live up to her expectations. And that's why I geeked out and went to the public library. And so it is indeed lucky that I grew up in a society where we have such things as public libraries, but here's what I'm struggling with. That is the society we have today. And yet, children are being told that they can't handle figures, figuring things out for themselves, that they can't handle, the welter of information that is out there, that they need to follow, you know, what is right and what is wrong and that we as adults will tell you what that is. Now, of course, that's an issue that's tight, you know, that's that's timeless, right, though the authority of the adult. But we're in a situation now, where the very advantages that we have living in a relatively free, still relatively democratic society are being framed as evils. So if, if a country with the wealth in all kinds of ways the wealth that we Have is nothing but a series of hurdles for young people, because that's what they are told. How, how does it get any better? It's it's the paradigm that the toxic negativity of this paradigm that it seems to me is just self fulfilling. It's literally a race to the bottom.

**Bret** 35:25

It's a It's a race to the bottom being initiated by people who have no idea what the bottom is like, they do not know where they are.

**Irshad Manji** 35:33

right about that, they don't know. So

**Bret** 35:37

the incredibly tragic thing about this moment is that because we have been so successful at solving so many problems, people don't realize what happens that if you remove the solutions, because you're pursuing some objective, whether it's a phantom, or it's real, you remove the solutions, and those problems will reemerge. And we've had it too easy, which doesn't mean that opportunity has been well distributed. In fact, I think it has concentrated in a way that's completely unacceptable, but to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. Because you don't realize that that's in fact, what it is, is a terrible tragedy. And unfortunately, those of us who do understand that it can be much, much worse than it is, are finding ourselves powerless to make that point. There's something so intoxicating about the idea that the problems are obvious the solutions are known, we just simply have to force civilization to them, that has made those with this power that is accumulating completely deaf to the warnings that they absolutely urgently need to hear.

**Irshad Manji** 36:47

Why do you think today? It is so much more difficult to inject nuance into into analyses and have that taken seriously? I mean, there are multiple factors. I know. Do you think there is something overarching?

**Bret** 37:10

Yes, more or less? I do. And I think that the something is corruption. And I mean, corruption in a in a general sense. There's, of course, a narrow sort of political corruption that occurs. But we have a general culture of corruption that has resulted in powerful forces unhooking the mechanisms by which we would figure out what is true because it is inconvenient for this industry, or that industry, or this coalition. So the ability to shut down an inquiry that leads in an inconvenient direction, has now swept across the board. And so the institution's I don't think in general, it is that people once understood, and now they don't, I think that what happened was the governance structure writ large, including journalism, and the culture of people that that adjust the way society functions, was more or less informed by a more or less factual understanding of the world through a process that yes, was very noisy, but wasn't perversely incentivized. And the I know, from looking at what takes place inside of science, that effectively, the mechanism that figures out what's true, and tells us what it is, irrespective of it, if it's what whether we what, irrespective of whether it is what we want to hear that mechanism is no longer functional. And so what that means is we are living in a kind of a giant, he said, she said, world, which is all about factions getting ahead of each other and not about the thing that actually ought to unite us, which is the truth of the precariousness of our position, the necessity that we figure out how to preserve the system as we have it to fix its defects as is possible, and to move forward through time aware that the real Jeopardy may come from outside, right, we could face for example, a Carrington event that would take out a large portion of, let's say, a third, you know, the of the grid, the electrical grid for North America would create a very serious nuclear hazard, because nuclear reactors depend on power in order not to melt down, etc. That's a threat. That's not a political question. That's a question we ought to be focused on because of the fragility of the system we've structured and all people ought to be united in looking at that and saying, well, that ought to be a high priority. But of course, it's on nobody's radar, because it doesn't fit with the paradigm of demonizing the other and arguing that in fact, they are the problem. We are this illusion it's time to give us power and all of the games that are usually played. So yes, I would say the collapse of the institutions that are supposed to inform us is at the core of this.

**Irshad Manji** 40:11

What would you say is the reason for the collapse? Where did that start?

**Bret** 40:18

Well, without being too specific about it, I would say that there is a, there are a set of processes that are uniquely capable, but are also fragile by nature. Right? So science is such a thing. Science is the best mechanism we have for figuring out what is true, there will be tweaks to the way we do it. But in general, I think we've landed on the best mechanism for robustly increasing our understanding over time, it is not tolerant to being plugged into market forces, right? It can't be in the same room with them, it needs distance. And so independence, it needs, it needs a firewall. And so by not firewalling science, and by saying Well, okay, market forces are great, they figure out what's better, and what's worse, so let's just plug the market in them. And we'll figure out who the best professors are. We'll figure out what the right experiments are, we'll figure out what the questions are, we ought to address by doing that through market forces, we've effectively taken the trappings of science and put them on to economic phenomena. And so the market may be very interested in telling us what we want to hear, it may be interested in flattering us. And it may be reluctant to warn us because that's kind of a bummer. And, you know, it doesn't sell cars. So we, you know, we took our our best asset, and we threw it in the shed with some chemicals that it can't withstand, and then we're surprised that it isn't working right. And it's not the only one of these, you know, we have market forces impacting the way our courts run, we have market forces, thoroughly infused in our journalistic mechanism, the first draft of history is being written by forces that are competing for our attention, and for which truth is at best secondary. So all of these things, I think, are downstream of this. I, you know, I'm very enthusiastic about markets, I believe they are uniquely capable, but they are not the right tool for anything and everything. They are the right tool for certain things, and they need to be kept away from other things. And because we didn't draw that line, I believe our institutions are in collapse.

**Irshad Manji** 42:48

So would you say, Well, okay, Oh, my gosh, there's so much I want to ask you here. You use the word collapse them's fightin words. You didn't just say decline, collapse,

**Bret** 43:04

collapse?

**Irshad Manji** 43:04

Is that effect a complete?

**Bret** 43:07

Probably, you know, I would love to see the University System resurrected. So that it could play its proper role. But I also have lived inside of it enough to know that, you know, you can go field by field and nine out of 10 of them are basically lobotomized. Right. And you know, you can see this very clearly in the COVID. epidemic, right. COVID has taken fields that we rarely pay close attention to in the public, and it has put them center state. And so this is like, you know, a, a random test of how healthy academia is right? Okay. Suddenly we're listening to virologists and epidemiologists, let's see, how credible are they? Well, they are circling the wagons around, for example, the idea that COVID-19 must have emerged from nature on altered and couldn't possibly have emerged from the laboratory and Wu Han that was studying these very things. And they have gone about demonizing people who said, Wait a minute, actually, there are at least four different kinds of evidence that suggests otherwise. And if you scratch the surface, and you dig a little deeper, you discover that actually, in part, there are perverse incentives, economic in nature, that would cause these fields to circle the wagons around what is increasingly clearly a false consensus. And so, you know, what I would say is that's not a coincidence. We, you know, history shows a field or two at random for us to check how well our institutions are doing. And what we found is that the people that we need to be completely independent of politics and economics. At this moment, are behaving in a completely political and economically motivated way. Right. And my contention is, you're going to find that across the map, right, any field you tune into is very likely to have these dynamics that, you know, your best bet for places where it isn't, are places where nothing is at stake. Right, the closer that a field is to economic phenomena, medicine, for example, the more corrupted tends to be. So yeah, I think, sadly, you can't just eat if you've if you've fixed the connection to the market of the university system tomorrow, it would take decades for the system to recover effectively, it would have to clear people whose for whom the corruption is endemic in their minds, and replace them with people who came from a place of mental independence. And it's it's not a short term solution.

**Irshad Manji** 46:02

But we don't have that time. you're suggesting.

**Bret** 46:07

You know, it's very hard to put a timeframe. But yeah, Carrington event that I mentioned, that could happen any day, right? We would get minimal warning, and there's very little we can do about it. We it is far too early to say that COVID-19 came from the lab in Wuhan. But let's put it this way, it is certainly possible to have increased the transmissibility, and the devastation that a particular virus is capable of, and for it to have escaped a lab. So we were playing exactly the game that could have caused COVID-19. Whether it did or it did not doesn't matter, we were playing that game, because we were being foolish, because we misunderstood the comparison between the risk of something like that emerging from nature, and the risk that we would in fact create it, and it would escape our control. So we know that we were playing that dumb game. And why were we playing it? Because of it's very directly a question of economics, you had a small number of people who successfully persuaded the funding apparatus to throw many millions of dollars at this question, because they effectively spooked it. Right? They told us this is coming, we're either going to know it before it happens, or we're going to be caught with our pants down. And, you know, we were we were spooked into creating this hazard. So yeah, we don't have this time. Now, you and I both have experienced a great deal of luck. And we are tuned in on the idea of luck. And it's possible that humanity will get very, very lucky. And although we are running unconscionable risks on a daily basis, that we will continue to flip coins and have them come up heads, and that if we started to write the ship, now, we would, we would make it. On the other hand, it does seem like we need some other plan in the short term, something that can behave reasonably even if our institutions are not functioning well.

**Irshad Manji** 48:21

So Brett, I'm going to confide something to you. And therefore to your listeners, obviously. Part of what I struggle with on a daily basis is my own faith in humanity. And, you know, having studied enough neuroscience and social psychology to recognize just how manipulated assuming we even have consciousness, how manipulated our conscious selves are, by the easily threatened ego. how short term how greedy how spooked as you put it, we can be and behave in highly, you know, disproportionate ways as a result. It makes me wonder whether Oh God, I hate to say this. Okay, here we go. Whether whether we even deserve to survive.

**Bret** 49:24

Yeah, well, let me help you with that I think I can. We definitely deserve to survive. Because, you know, we're stuck in the following in the following predicament. All of the worst atrocities in history are downstream from programs that are evolutionary in nature. But all of the best stuff that we are capable of, is to In other words, humans are effectively caught between multiple possibilities. We can be terrible, we can engage in warfare, and genocide, and we can be completely deaf to the humanity of others, and treat them as objects or worse as entities deserving of torment. Or we can be tremendously compassionate and innovative, and hell bent on creating beauty, and insight. All of those things are features of humans. And I think wise people have repeatedly happened on the recognition that it isn't one or the other, that we, the question is really will we create the circumstances that bring out the remarkable things that only humans are capable of? Or will we allow those structures to break down and return us to this natural state of conflict in which our, our innovative capacity is put towards bigger and more frightening weapons and, you know, torture mechanisms. And so I guess what I would say is, if we can recognize that both things are on the table, and we can understand that we are actually morally obligated to create the conditions that bring out the best in humans, then we will have earned our place. And if we ignore that obligation, and play these petty games, and destroy ourselves, in some sense, you know, that will be on the collective us for missing the opportunity. And, to me, the thing that is most tragic is that the people who wouldn't have done that are condemned to the same fate. I want to see as as many people as possible, recognize that human beings can be terrific creatures, if they have the conditions conducive to it, and then which

**Irshad Manji** 52:03

which they themselves have to create the conditions conducive to it. Exactly. But

**Bret** 52:07

the point is, look, I can name many, many people who would no doubt take us in. You know, we can't say that it would work. But they would seek to take us in the correct direction to liberate as many humans as possible to give them the tools to innovate positively to generate insight, beauty, all of those things, there's no shortage of those people. They are on a ship with lots of people who are insisting on playing this other game and demonizing and tormenting and torturing, and I hate that those two groups are stuck with each other. Because, you know, there's only so much the wise people can do to divert our course, to the obvious one. But I also see that as a predicament that, for me, at least, fills every day with meaning.

**Irshad Manji** 53:04

Dinah just absolutely. You know, you get out of bed, knowing what you're here on this earth to do.

**Bret** 53:10

Right. And and it's, you know, it's certainly an interesting puzzle. How the heck can you steer a ship like this one? You know, where even is the helm? Nevermind that nobody's Manning it? Where even is it? Right? Are we going to get there through podcast land? I don't know.

**Irshad Manji** 53:28

Well, you know, I think I think enlightened, rich form forms of media have to play a part. Because again, you know, we're, we're immersed in multimedia today. And, and it would be silly, I think, to suggest that, you know, any of us is immune to being influenced or shaped, you know, by by the media that we consume. But you, you're, you're I'm not going to call it optimism, because I think you're smarter than that. I know, you're smarter than that. But you seem full of hope, which is not the same thing as optimism. Hope suggests that we do have agency should we choose to use it and use it wisely, obviously. And you remind me in that way of, of my younger self, when I was traveling, you know the world speaking to Muslims and others, about the need for reform in my face of Islam, and I remember being told by all kinds of people, some well meaning some more malevolent that, you know, give it up, man Gee, if Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream, you have a pipe dream, you know, violence is baked into Islam. And this may be your way of denying that in fact, you're an atheist. But better that you come out of the closet now as godless, then you know, waste your breath and everybody else's on something that simply can't happen. And trust me when I say that I took a lot of time to think about those sorts of comments, I sat with myself for many an hour. Really, you know, exposing myself to questions about whether, in fact, I do believe, why do I believe and so forth. But the bottom line is this. That was, you know, 16 1718 years ago, today, I hear from young Muslims, a whole new generation, and then even the generation after that, who say, you know, I can have conversations like this, with my parents, with the elders of my community, even with theologians, because people like you opened the door. And once once that door is open, it can't be closed. Now whether I choose as a young Muslim to walk through that door. That, you know, that is my choice to make. But I couldn't walk through it, if it wasn't already open. I remember when I was teaching at the University of Southern California, round about four years ago, I held an event called forbidden questions about Islam, forbidden questions, and the whole point was to invite people's most burning questions that they felt they couldn't turn anywhere else to ask. And at least, I would assure them, I can't say this for the audience. But I would assure them, that they will not be immediately judged for having those questions. Let's get it all out on the table. Not only was that event allowed to proceed, but afterwards, I spent four hours in the atrium of the building, engaging with a large group of young Muslim women, almost all of whom were he job. Okay, the headcovering. And who couldn't get enough of this honest discourse. And it, it reminded me that, to quote, Edmund Burke, and I'll quote him, you know, directly, I won't try to sanitize it. No man makes a bigger mistake than he who does nothing because he does only little. It's, it's so true, that we still have that agency.

**Bret** 58:01

Alright, shall we? There's something I'm, I'm dying to talk to you about. And I, unfortunately, this is going to require a little bit of a disclaimer here, because I think I know what the question is, but I don't really have the position from which to ask it. And so I need to say a little bit about my own history. Before I ask a question that I think we will both agree is not my place to ask. So your story and mine are not remotely similar. But there is an interesting parallel. So I read about you the story that you recount earlier of having been kicked out of madrasa for asking too many questions, or the wrong kinds of questions. So here's my story. I grew up in a very secular home, we were culturally Jewish, but there was nothing invested in, in Judaism as a religion. And as my friends were, you know, many of my friends were Jewish, getting permits for it, and the like, are heading towards it. And I felt a bit left out what was this thing? And in fact, my best friend when I was quite young, Aaron, came from a household. To be honest, I couldn't tell you, I still don't know what they actually believe. But I know that they were observant, right. So I spent many saders at their house. And, you know, I got to see what a, a non secular Jewish Home looked like. And so in any case, at some point, I actually asked to go to school, and to figure out what this thing was. And I went, and I was thoroughly disappointed. And the reason that I was disappointed, I was allowed to ask questions, but the answers were nonsense. And I knew they were nonsense. And so what was the point why, you know, school was already a problem for me. I wasn't any good at it. And that revealed something about what was wrong with it. And here, I was, To go to more school, and when I asked questions that I knew were perfectly good questions, the answers that came back were gobbledygook. And so I left. And in some ways, I think that that's a bit of a tragic story. Because, you know, that was, it was just I dipped my toe in the water somewhere and had I done it in some, you know, in a different building in a different part of town, I might have had a different experience. But what I got, I took to be representative, and I paid very little attention to Judaism directly from that point forward until I started to realize my error, as you know, as an adult. In any case, it leads me here. There is a question about why Islam is the way it is, and there's no doubt there's a tremendous amount of violence inherent to the doctrine in the Quran, but you could say the very same thing about about the Torah. It's in there, too. And so there's a concept which I have played with, I've also heard, Eric has a formulation of it. And the idea is that there's a distinction between these two traditions. And the distinction is about the mechanism through which religious dogma is updated. That Judaism effectively has a, a living, rabbinical tradition that interprets the doctrine in light of modern realities, right? So we don't spend so much time on the details of Moses's laws of war, which are perfectly abhorrent, because it's not relevant. And in fact, it is in conflict with the modern world. So it is de emphasized by a living tradition. And that in Islam, and you correct me if I have this wrong, in Islam, there is actually a prohibition effectively against update. And I don't know how much you know about my evolutionary conjecture about what religion is. But what I have said is that religions are literally false, but metaphorically, true, metaphorically true means that we take things that actually put a linear jet advantage and encode them in stories that are not factual, but that result in adaptive behavior. That mechanism is subject to capture. Right? So the story of Jesus flipping over the the money changers tables in the temple is one of a rebellion against capture effectively.

**Bret** 1:02:46

Martin Luther having challenged indulgences in the Catholic Church is a challenge to a kind of capture, and that Islam has encoded resistance to capture in the prohibition prohibition against profits after Muhammad. How am I doing so far?

**Irshad Manji** 1:03:09

I think you're getting the broad strokes. Quite right. There are some interpretive issues here that, you know, I'll certainly talk about in a second. But so far, I'm I hear you.

**Bret** 1:03:22

Okay. So the question is, every tradition has what I would call an analog to virus protection, the way you might have virus protection on your computer, religious texts have a way to prevent people from capturing the voice of God and using it for their own benefit. and preventing new profits would be one such mechanism. You know, a Rabbinical class that has licensed to shut down bad schools of thought, for example, might be another. But the question is a, is there something to the idea that in the ancient world, there was a great deal of brutality, that brutality has traveled more easily through time with Islam, because its particular version of resistance to bad ideas, prevents update, and therefore, modernity is a bigger leap? Is there an app? Does that strike you as correct?

**Irshad Manji** 1:04:25

It strikes me as potentially correct. Now, let me explain why potentially. And let me start by saying that if if I believed that Islam as a faith or a religion was incapable of reinterpretation. I could not have integrity as as a Muslim. I would, I would have to leave the religion. But I don't believe that because it's one thing how how The practitioners of a religion on the whole behave is obviously a demonstration of what they believe. But it is not a demonstration of what is possible. And so for example, most Muslims don't even know right? That the Quran, Islam scripture contains three times as many verses calling on Muslims to think, ask questions, analyze, rethink, and decide for themselves, then verses that tell us to just submit to this or that three times as many verses. Most Muslims have, and I'm talking about globally now have never been exposed to the idea that I picked up at the Public Library, namely, that Islam has its own tradition of independent thinking, of creative reasoning and dissent and debate. And yeah, reinterpretation. It's a, it's a tradition known as each the heart, not jihad, although even that word does not mean violence. It's the connotation that militants have gave, given it that, you know, now conjures up violence that are in our heads. But each jihad is all about struggling with the complexity of the world. And there are plenty of, you know, again, power hungry theologians, some would say that's a redundant phrase, I know, but power hungry theologians who would argue that, you know, the watershed managers of this world would like you to believe that that HD heart is open to all Muslims. But no, it's not you need a certain amount of scholarship. And even lesser known scholars have pointed out that the one right, under, you know, the umbrella VHD had that all Muslims have is to decide for themselves, what scholars to follow. So that those scholars who argue that HD head is something that all Muslims need to exercise and have both the responsibility and the right to exercise. One can choose to follow those scholars, not simply the louder, more institutionally backed who hang on to their power by telling us, you cannot think for yourself. Right? So all of this is simply to say that the fact is that it is we Muslims who need reform, and in reforming ourselves, we thereby reform Islam, but Islam itself has the raw materials to overcome what has been abused in its name. I will just finish up by saying saying something that, you know, I remember when Bill Clinton was president, and more than once I heard him say, and I was, you know, pretty young at the time. And I, I was struck by this, that there is nothing wrong with America, that cannot be fixed by what is right with America. And I must tell you, that that is exactly how I view my relationship with Islam.

**Bret** 1:08:26

Beautiful, beautiful. So this is actually better than I had hoped. Because while I think there's something to be evaluated in this question of what the update mechanisms are, and what circumstances they find themselves in, are there certain ones that just by happenstance happen to work better and modernity and the like. But the second part of what I wanted to ask you about is that I am by no means a scholar of Middle East history. I know what I know. But I also know that I don't know in what way it is biased, that it is obviously so fiercely fought over that it's one has to be very cautious of what they think they know. But my sense is that there are at least four examples of Islamic States attempting to modernize and making substantial progress on that goal, before being bucked back to a a more religious form of governance, and therefore a more conservative interpretation of the obligations of citizens. And you know, in the 20th century, the ones that I spot are, maybe most obviously, Turkey and Ataturk's modernization, but also, Moses deck in Iran. It's going to be controversial, but Saddam Hussein is evil a human being as he was, there is a story to be told about what form Iraq was taking under his rule and what happened as a result of our deposing him. And saddam in Egypt, a very different example. But all of these things suggest a sort of a tendency towards modernization of the Islamic world, that then is overwhelmed by geopolitical forces that may have nothing to do with religion, but that religion is, you know, maybe it's even an analogue of what you and I both fear is going to happen in the US where the pretense of ubiquitous white supremacy is going to create white supremacy, right? So what do you think, am I right that Islam would probably modernized through whatever mechanism, if it were not constantly up against geopolitics?

**Irshad Manji** 1:11:09

I think that, because of the tools within Islam, to update interpretations, I think that a lot more people would be a lot less afraid to offer up modernizing conceptions of, of faith right now. And of course, for a long time, Muslims have been, you know, suffocated by fear, first fear of violent, autocratic rulers, later, fear of the state itself. And throughout, because Islam was born, in what we know today as Arabia, and the culture of honor, which I'll explain in just a second, is fundamental to that culture. Culturally, there is an inbuilt resistance to doing anything innovative. Because one always has to worry within this culture of honor of dishonouring your family? The culture, I mean, honor, you know, to American ears sounds like a wonderful thing. But here, we're talking about collective shame. And it's one thing, you know, for an individual, such as myself, to go out and write a book about the need for reform, and, and then, you know, propagate that message as an individual. But one of the things that my own mother had to contend with, as I was doing this was the question, you know, about her honor, as a parent, and her honor as a Muslim, by raising a daughter, first of all, yeah, a daughter, not just a son, but a daughter, who dared to ask these questions and think for herself. So I knew that even as I was writing the book, that this is something my mother will be punished for. Because, you know, she's my mother, and therefore ultimately responsible for me in this mindset, right? So the real challenge, I think, Brett, to modernizing the practice of Islam is not the religion itself. It is what I have called in my first book, founder mentalism, not fundamentalism, but the privilege of considering yourself as an Arab, the founder of Islam, and therefore, the ability to pull rank. And this is what Saudi Arabia does, time. And again, that, you know, we Muslims, have just blindly given the Saudis, the authority to consider themselves the custodians of the two main, most important kind of institutions, you know, within Islam. And because those institutions are located in Saudi Arabia, but just because Islam was founded there. So what? Look at what these people are doing, in the name of God, and yet, again, you know, this founder mentalism is something We don't even think about this is what I'm trying to get Muslims and more are thinking about it. Why Saudi Arabia? Why give them that authority? What if this is not an idea that's going to take off anytime soon? I assure you, but what if Muslims boycotted the hudge until the Saudis began to treat people, foreign workers, women, Jews, Shia Muslims, minorities, in other words, within their own state decently and what if we boycotted the Hajj, which takes place in Saudi Arabia in Mecca, obviously, until such time as Saudi Arabia stopped supporting the genocide of the Uighur Muslims in China. This is the kind of thing that we don't even allow ourselves to think about. Because it's just too frightening.

**Bret** 1:16:10

So actually, this, you know, again, I am not a scholar of the Middle East, I'm, you know, I'm a lay person in this regard, because I guess everyone is unless you have special understanding. But it seems to me and I was going to raise the question of Saudi Arabia, but you raise it much more directly than I would have. The accident of Saudi Arabia being Central and the possibly non accident of Islam, being location focused, is conspiring with geopolitics. Because of course, Saudi Arabia has become so wealthy and so powerful, due to its alliances with the West, which are, of course, largely about bad fossil fuels. That that accident of history of there being a useless substrate buried under Saudi Arabia that suddenly became, you know, the core of 20th century power, and the monuments of Islam, and the pilgrimage is heading towards this place. And even I find something important about the idea that Muslims multiple times a day are orienting themselves physically in the direction of Saudi Arabia, that all of this has a kind of centralizing effect on the thought process, which means that if, I mean, it might be even a blessing and a curse, if I can use that term in this context, because to the extent that you and those who are aligned with you, in hoping to modern law, modernize Islam, are successful, that the tendency towards a centralized view of the religion might more effectively cause that to spread through what is in fact, a Muslim diaspora. But it works the other way too, which is that to the extent that geopolitical forces conspire against modernization, the resistance to modernizing is, is more networked by virtue of the connection of Muslims to to a particular patch of land?

**Irshad Manji** 1:18:35

Well, let me tell you one other thing that's going on, because you lay out, you know, a couple of potential directions, the third direction, which might actually might fit with the first one, namely, the modernizing of Islam, but I think it's a tragedy, what I'm about to reveal is that the adherence to even identifying with Islam is plummeting in many parts of the Muslim world, Middle East states, and even Iran. Now, one would perhaps not be surprised by that in Iran, given theocracy given imposition, and, you know, no human being actually takes well to being imposed upon. But even in those parts of the world that would otherwise quote, stick with Islam as a way of sticking it to Western colonizers aren't doing that anymore. And a whole new generation is beginning to just let go of any loyalty to Islam. And it's something that I think a lot of Muslims are in denial about. Because again, they recognize that their own identities are going They have to be challenged, if they're going to allow for a, you know, fresh air to come into the practice of Islam. But in the course of selfishly protecting their own identities, they're allowing the very source of that identity, Islam itself to be thrown out the window, when the reality is, you really can have a win win here, where, you know, you have something more like a reformed Islam, like we have in America, reformed Judaism, where a whole new generation can identify with it, but identify in ways that have integrity to them. You know, there are avenues within Islam, to promote environmentalism, to promote animal welfare, even the well being of dogs that are traditionally thought to be toxic nudges, as it said, in Arabic, dirty and spiritual, dirty, spiritually dirty, not merely physically dirty. What I can tell you, that I see out there, Facebook pages and initiatives that people write to me about in which a new generation is taking the reigns of what Islam means to them. And really, in truly making it meaningful, to meaningful enough to address today's issues. Those who live in societies, where they're free enough to be able to smuggle that into their lives, is where this is happening. Those who don't live in free enough societies to do that, is where Islam is dying.

**Bret** 1:21:50

Wow, wow, that is fascinating. And I do see a crystal clear hazard, which is if what you have is a choice between a primitive, primitive Islam that is adapted to a world we no longer live in. And pure secularism, that you will run the risk in the Islamic world of going from the one hazard to what we are now seeing in the West, which is kind of a spiritual chaos, that I think is about to jeopardize everything we have accomplished, right, and really the right thing to do. And it's a very hard sell, because for some reason people are very attached to, you know, who the discoverers were of particular things. And I don't get this at all. Because, you know, as a scientist, I know full well, that the Enlightenment was not a Jewish project. But I don't find the slightest bit of embarrassment in taking those tools as my own as the birthright of every human and wielding them to the best effect I can, and my senses, okay, so whatever population you came from, didn't come up with the Enlightenment, or it had a different enlightenment, the tradition has now died out because of historical facts. So what? Take the tools and learn to wield them in the interest of what's right. And don't worry so much about who discovered them, right. The fact is, most of us didn't discover anything. And we're using tools that we inherited from either our own ancestors or somebody else's. But we are also part of one human lineage. And if we just simply could glimpse for even a moment, the way we are jeopardized together, the way we are vulnerable together, and that it's going to take everything we've got, right if we put aside our petty differences, and we simply say, Well, what is the best shot we have getting through the next 500 years? Right? That's still a hard project. Even if you put our differences aside, it's still a hard project in light of the challenge that we have created for ourselves with technology and industrialization. And we can do it. But I don't think we are going to do it, if we are fighting each other over, you know, Bronze Age distrust. And, you know, an obsession with genes that doesn't even mention them because nobody at the time these texts were written knew anything about genes, right? That's really what this is, is the genes fighting each other, using us as tools and throwing us away. And we need to modernize. But, you know, I think, you know, if there's an error that I remember from the intellectual tradition that I grew up with, it was the sense that secularism was the answer, right, that as soon as we all wake up to the glory of, you know, our secular selves, that the problems will be solved and I think We now know enough to realize that that actually leaves a gaping hole that people fill with nonsense. And it creates a nonsensical battle from which no one will emerge that, in fact, we can't go back to the traditional view. And we can't abandon the view entirely, we have to create something that is actually up to the challenge of modernity, but honors the traditions from which we come.

**Irshad Manji** 1:25:32

Exactly right. At least in my view, exactly. Right. And I love Brett that. By the way, do you consider yourself an atheist?

**Bret** 1:25:42

I never say that word about myself. And there's a reason that I don't it's not, you know, I think my sense is that almost anybody who draws the distinction, if they heard me say what I believe would classify me as one because I don't believe that there is anything supernatural, there's no reason to hypothesize it. But I don't say that I'm an atheist, because atheist now carries baggage. It's an affirmative kind of belief. Exactly. And the atheists have shoulder that burden very poorly, in my opinion, they have they have, you know, they have had a religious fervor about them for doing away with other traditions, that is completely inappropriate. And it has resulted in some of our smartest atheists, let's say, completely missing the fact that religion is serving a function that much is obvious evolutionarily. And so we are obligated not to pretend it's a mistake, which is what the new atheists have done. So no, I don't call myself an atheist, but probably everybody else would be likely to see me that way. Sure,

**Irshad Manji** 1:26:47

fair enough. And I again, you know, really appreciate the fact that you've distinguish between the label and the baggage that goes the assumptions that go with that label, which is exactly you know, the the issue that I have with labeling people that said, I love the fact that you've pointed out that we are in a state of spiritual chaos. And I think more than just chaos, I think it's a void, that you know, politics, whether it is the cult ism of Q anon, or the cult ism of BLM have swooped in to fill. So, you know, though organized religion is on the decline. That doesn't mean religion is on the decline. There. And that really does suggest to me, that we know as human beings, the the function that organized religion has played for us is a function that speaks to a deep seated, perhaps even genetic need of ours, right, the need for belonging, the need for community, and, frankly, the need for identity. But the other thing that religion, I think has done, which I really have didn't pay attention to, until quite recently, is that it gave human beings a way of cooperating with one another outside of the immediate family, that there was an ability or a reason or an incentive to trust people outside of your immediate family, for better or for worse, not everybody deserved that trust, obviously, but to trust people outside of your immediate family in order to cooperate on a wider scale in order to build society's institutions and ultimately, civilizations. Seems to me that, once again, we have among the cult is, you know, the cult, we've got raging right now, we have a kind of a blind trust for one another. But I don't see them exactly interested in anything that cooperates with others, you know, I see merely again, us versus them, which religions IE, organized religions, traditional religions easily lapse into you, I totally understand that. But there is a larger vision, it seems to me within traditional religions, that the cults of our time, simply don't have. Am I being honestly Am I being a little too rosy now? The religions that we've previously

**Bret** 1:29:34

belong to, no, this is a distinction I have trouble convincing people of but what we have is traditions that have stood the test of time about what we can infer certain things must be true, right? It is impossible, that something as durable as Islam is not functional. That doesn't make it good or bad and it will have both components. But we know that it has worked to get people through history word, a simple error, the way the new atheists would have it, then those people who believed everything that Muslims believed, except for doctrine would have an advantage that wastes less of their time. And they don't clearly or at least they haven't. And so we know that ancient traditions served a purpose, what we don't know is that they continue to serve a purpose, presumably, the amount, the degree to which they serve, people will have changed over time in a way that we can't track. And beyond that, any new belief system, we will not be able to say the same thing. In other words, if we came up with a modern version of an ancient religion, or a novel of religion, we can't say that it stands the test of time. And so we don't know whether it serves long term interests or not. So we are stuck in a in a bit of a predicament, which is that the tools that fashion a coherent belief system, our selection, and selection takes time. And so we cannot use that tool, we have to use something better. On the other hand, you know, your, your description of religions, as creating a basis for trust beyond the family, I believe this is literally accurate. And then in fact, one thing that we cannot see is that selection in doubt us with an understanding of immediate family, because evolutionarily speaking, there is a lot to be gained by understanding to whom you are related, and how related you are and to whom you are not directly related, but should behave as if you are so for example, in laws, right, our close family, but not for genetic reasons, you're effectively related through your descendants to your in laws, which is a very interesting evolutionary phenomenon. But in effect, these communities, religious communities do extend trust beyond the family. But really what you're looking at is extended families. These are lineages. And so the genetic basis for that trust is there up until a certain point at which increasingly modern mixtures of people result in the establishment of trust between populations that may not be closely related. And so there's a new evolutionary question, which is, if I 200 years ago, being in a Jewish community somewhere, would have extended trust to other Jews that I did not know myself to be related to, but in fact, I was in effect more closely related to them than to others. Can we now take those same parameters and float them without the genetic connection? Right? In other words, Can people who have no genetic basis for trust, stable II come to trust each other? And then hopefully, the answer to that question is yes. And if the question, if the answer to that question is yes, then the ultimate question is, why not the human lineage? Right? We are, in fact, so if these belief systems evolved in the context of lineages, fighting lineages, and therefore needing to extend trust in order to survive through time, right? The threat from the outside is what causes you to view others as aligned. Well, we are all threatened from the outside, we are now threatened. We've seen the enemy and it is us, right? Our technology is going to do us in if we don't figure out how to collaborate. So the question, maybe the, the ultimate question is, can we view ourselves as one lineage fighting an external threat that is not human in nature? Or if it is human? It is us? I suspect the answer to that is yes. Whether we will get there I don't know.

**Irshad Manji** 1:34:08

Well, and and this is why, Brett, I mean, I'm working with exactly that question in leading the moral courage project. I know that the phrase moral courage easily connotes the idea of speaking truth to power. But the problem with just leaving it at that is, you know, it suggests that there's that your truth, the one that you are speaking is the only truth worth considering. And moreover, if you're speaking it to power that must suggest that you yourself have no power, that power is always external to you. When the reality is that you know, those of all of us are born with brains, and therefore born with that primitive part that gives rise to the ego. And the ego, if we're not aware of its machinations is at least In my view, the most pervasive, most pernicious power and most universal power that exists, and it makes us cling to quote, truth, believing that we must lest we be weak, lest we be, you know, wiped out. And makes us believe that therefore we can't be listening to where other people are coming from. This is I think, what it means to have moral courage in a time as urgent as ours, quite simply, it means listening, instead of labeling, or maybe I should get more realistic here listening before labeling, you know, but but it's because there is a biological impulse to feel threatened. That we've actually got to figure out ways to tame that impulse. And it seems to me that we will not figure out enduring ways. If we don't believe that perspectives other than our own. Our worth are worth hearing out.

**Bret** 1:36:22

So this fits very closely with a set of thoughts I've had, I'll just lay them out briefly, you can tell me what you think. I have noticed the following thing in traversing across lines that maybe I wouldn't be expected to traverse across. when one thinks independently, one ends up building kind of an a personal epistemology. And that personal epistemology comes with terms that will have been either invented or will have been redefined, so that they are sharper. And what tends to be true of people who have generated such an epistemology is that they will very frequently forget that they've done it. In other words, they will create this way of understanding the world that is self consistent. And it will sound like it is deliverable in the common language English in my case. But if you take two such people, and you put them together, and you say, Okay, now talk about what's true, they will very frequently run afoul of their personal redefinition of the world for self consistency, because they won't realize that the other person has done it also, and the other person will simply sound wrong to them. So the way to get around this is to spend time, and I think it's completely unavoidable, it is necessary. When you are dealing with people who have thought independently for sufficiently long to have their own worldview. You have to spend, its often weeks learning to hear the other person as they are actually intending to be heard, and teaching them to hear you the same way. Right? So there's this process of saying, okay, when I say the word sympathy, this is actually what I mean, right? I don't mean, what people typically mean. And when you get past that, what you typically discover is that, you know, you have the most fascinating puzzle imaginable, which is you have all of these minds, which are, you know, constrained by the perceptual and cognitive tools that each of us have, which are highly idiosyncratic in many ways, and they're also limited to whatever experiences we have had in the world, our own personal histories dramatically affect what we think is true. And then you can, you know, we have this marvelous tool of language that allows us to compare notes. But in order to compare notes, you sort of need to build the Rosetta Stone for each conversation. And that's not a process that can be quick, right? To the extent that these worldviews are deep, that process is slow. Once you get there, though, and you sort of have extended, sufficient trust for somebody else to compel, you have their little glossary, so that you can understand them as they need to be understood, there is a tremendous benefit to be had in teaming up. Now the problem the fly in the ointment of all of this is that it is contingent on the fact that you are in a good faith environment. Right? So if everybody in the room is extending to others, a sense that what you believe is sure to be self consistent, and or short to be largely self consistent, and that there is benefit in trading worldviews and then seeing if anything new emerges, that's great, but you can't do it in any old room where somebody may be there. You know, selling something or whatever they might be doing. Alright, so the question then is, if a does that model dovetail with what you've experienced? And B, if so what does it imply about the project that you're suggesting?

**Irshad Manji** 1:40:18

A, it does dovetail with what I've experienced. It takes time to figure out, first of all, what do we have enough in common, that we can start from a place of trust before diving into difference. But I must tell you that I'm not as hung up about the need for patience, as maybe what you suggested, here's why. My many years of walking this complicated Earth, tells me that every single one of us is more than meets the eye. We are, as I say, and don't label me, the only the only label that I can stand by that captures all of us is the label plural. We are all plurals. And let me bounce this off of you. If we got into the habit, right, of entering into potentially contentious conversations, conversations in which we know there's going to be disagreement. But we started off by saying, look, we don't know much about each other, we probably only really know that we disagree on x issue. But the one thing that I can count on, I would say to you, Brett, is that you are so much more than what I think I know about you. So am I, I'm so much more than what you assume about me. And can we agree therefore, that in this conversation, I'm not going to judge you, or judge the totality of who you are, based on your position on this particular issue? And could you extend to me the same courtesy? If we established a ground rule like that? First of all, is that too idealistic? Is that a habit we can actually get into in order to begin making, you know, making a conversation more constructive than it might otherwise be?

**Bret** 1:42:33

So it's funny, I had almost forgot to mention it. The there is a small community of people, I don't even know exactly know what its boundaries are. But that was united by our friendship with Mike Brown, Mike Brown, used to hold a a gathering he called science camp, where he would bring scientists to a particular Island. And we would talk to each other about what we thought were true was true, doing exactly the sort of thing you and I are describing here. And there was a thing that we had called double Island rule, the double Island rule, because we were meeting on double island was that when somebody says something, that sounds stupid, you know, they wouldn't be in the conversation, if they were stupid. Therefore, you are obligated to imagine that what they have said makes sense relative to some framework, and you're obligated to look for it right leaping to the conclusion that because somebody has said something preposterous, that they are obviously not making sense wouldn't wouldn't be a reasonable thing to do in that context. Now, you can't apply this rule, just any old place. Right? Lots of people say lots of stupid stuff. But in the context where you have curated the discussion, so that everybody there knows what sense sounds like, at the point people stop making sense, there's typically a reason for it. And very frequently, it comes down to one of these glossary comparisons or something like that. So I love your approach to this, which is, you know, all wise people recognize that, you that I might be the central player in my story, but that you are surely the central player in your story. And therefore I need to correct the discussion for the fact that if each participant is having that experience that you know, and this is someplace very important to me, we are actually having a conversation that exists between us. The important thing about this conversation is not what happened in your head that could go on to be important. You could go on to do something with it. Likewise, I could go on to do something with it. But the primary important of this conversation is that you and I have created an emergency space between us in which we have reached and understand, right. And it contains pieces of what I think and pieces of what you think. And it seems to be hanging together in the middle in the sense that we seem to agree on important things that are enlightening in their own right. And it's very hard, I think, to create a desire to do that, for people who have too frequently been rewarded for, let's say, zero sum competition in discussion, where typically they feel good if they score points in a discussion. Or if they get lots of kudos for having one up somebody, right. But if your experiences that actually if I, if I just simply have faith that there is an emergent feature to this conversation, and I work to enhance the emergent part of the conversation, that it tends to be good for me in ways that I can't even put my finger on, so I don't need to worry about it.

**Irshad Manji** 1:46:03

Well, and I think that it tends to be good in a way that I can. And I think most people, if they think about it this way, would easily be able to put their finger on, which is this, look, if, if you if you want to be heard, whatever your message, the surest way, the most reliable way to get a fair hearing, is to give one first, not because there's any magic in that. But because there is a biological process here, where, Brett if I am asking you sincere questions about where you're coming from, and I'm listening to understand, not to win, because there's no need to turn a perfectly good discussion into a debate. And I continue to ask you authentic questions from a place of curiosity and not judgment, whatever emotional defenses, you may have walked into the conversation with, because you knew that we disagreed on something, hence, the high emotional defenses. Now your emotional defenses can lower. and that in turn means that the clutter and the clutter in your head of wanting to poke holes in whatever argument I'm about to make, can at the very least, diminish. And you'll have more space to hear where I'm coming from. Exactly, because I've given you the space to be heard. Again, I'm not saying that, you know, every conversation is going to go swimmingly as a result, but I will tell you, I, I'm the CO executive producer of a documentary coming out soon, about a young woman, one of my mentees from NYU, who advocated changing the mississippi state flag, particularly the Confederate battle emblem in that flag. And, you know, her movement won this long standing goal just a few months ago. But in the process, she launched an incendiary protest, and of course, received a ton of hate for it. And then she decided she's going to try something different. And she tried exactly what you and I have just described. And she sat down with not just a supporter of the Confederate flag, but somebody who belongs to the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Okay. And she started by asking him a genuine question, heartfelt. How does that flag make you feel? So not a brain Buster? Not gotcha. Just how does it make you feel? And he replied, makes me feel at home. He asked her, how does it make you feel? She said, like I'm not at home, even though I am. And the conversation got underway in earnest. And during that time, the flag supporter, Lewis is his name. realize something he realized that he actually cared more about Genesis than he did about the flag itself. And afterwards, I asked him, What the hell man, like how did that happen? And he said, honestly, I've just never experienced respect from anybody on the other side, like I did today. It is it is that it is that simple. Not saying that it's easy to show respect to somebody with whom you profoundly disagree on something that you're passionate about. But when you do offer it, it's amazing what can happen. And for those who assume, I have nothing to say to somebody who must obviously be a racist. Let me tell you, not in that conversation, not after that conversation. But about 10 months later, Lewis through his own volition, pulled down the Confederate flag that was flying in his backyard, neatly, folded it up, and put it in a box called things of the past. And between that conversation, and that moment, he not only joined the new flag movement, but this is so beautifully delicious Lee Mississippi, he became a mentor, to the leaders of the movement, teaching them, how to protect themselves with guns,

**Irshad Manji** 1:51:16

how to work a gun, how to clean a gun, how to maintain it, how to get it registered, he was their guru. And let me tell you, that gave them the peace of mind to go boldly forth.

**Bret** 1:51:32

That is a beautiful story. It was a really beautiful story. And it resonates for so many different reasons. And the Confederate flag is the perfect thing to be at the heart of that story. Because anybody who has engaged southerners who favored that flag knows that it is not simply in general is not even flown by people proudly, as an assertion of racial dominance. It is flown as a symbol of Southern identity for certain people, right heritage, heritage. Now those of us who you know, from the north, or black or whatever, rightly understand that flag as a threat, right to something important. And so you can just see how the conversation bogs down in the assumption of what the other must be thinking.

**Irshad Manji** 1:52:33

And the key word, their assumption, right, the assumption.

**Bret** 1:52:37

And so the other thing that I would say is, I have not lived that story over the Confederate flag. But I have lived many analogs of this story where there is somebody I'm not supposed to be able to talk to. And something in me that I think others would regard as perverse finds that challenge irresistible, right? I love to talk to such people. And when I do, it's not every time but it's certainly the majority of times, it is readily possible to cross that bridge. It is frequently delightful, what you find on the other side, it's not typically enlightened, they may not feel that I am enlightened. But the discovery of the humanity on the other side of a bridge that's supposed to be uncrossable is so rewarding, right? It is so reifying of the sense of humanity and possibility and optimism and all of those things that I swear to you it's addictive. And I'm I know, I'm talking to somebody who must feel that same thing. And if only, you know, I've said it in various ways, I've said that doing away with your own bigotry is like giving yourself a huge raise. Right? You don't know what cost you're paying, walking around the world with bigotry, it's it's costing you every hour of every day in ways you don't have any idea about until you get rid of it. And when you get rid of it, you'll discover people are more interesting, they're more fun, they're more surprising. And, you know, it really is like some giant raise that just makes you freer than you were before.

**Irshad Manji** 1:54:28

If life becomes an adventure.

**Bret** 1:54:30

It does. And and if people understood that, like, you know, if you could give yourself a raise a monetary raise, would you do it? Of course you would, right? If you could give yourself a raise that just didn't happen to pay in money, but it paid in something else that's more valuable. Would you do that? Of course you would. Well, here's one, you know, to the extent that you have bigotry, right. just cancel it. Just try it out. Try it out for a week, right? See if you're not a happier person. If you don't feel smarter, frankly. Right, because these biases, they don't help you think clearly. Right? That's so true. They're they're about check,

**Irshad Manji** 1:55:06

they prevent you from thinking that you know, from actually thinking

**Bret** 1:55:11

that is exactly exactly right. That's a lovely story. What is the name of the documentary? It's called Mississippi

**Irshad Manji** 1:55:17

turning. Oh, good one. And you know, some people may think that as a result of the new flag and all that it implies that you know, Mississippi is turning as in spoiling right? And other people will see mississippi mississippi turning for the better so either way, we've got ourselves covered.

**Bret** 1:55:35

Love it. It's a it's a deep play on words. And the did I glean that the the protagonist, or one of the protagonists of your story, her name was Genesis Genesis. Yes. Genesis. All right. Well, that's interesting, too. Yeah. Okay. That's, that's fantastic. I look forward to this, this documentary. It maybe it will succeed in making the point to many about what might be on the other side. And we can stop this nonsense of accusing people of being deplorable or whatever it is that people somehow mad, it's hard to once you stop doing that, it's hard to even understand what is in people's minds about it. Alright, are there other things that you think we should cover? We've been at this a good couple hours

**Irshad Manji** 1:56:25

here we have I've enjoyed every minute of it. Um, I wonder if there's any interest were far well, somewhat far out of it now. But in tackling what happened on Capitol Hill, on January the sixth, and whether, you know, sort of what I've learned over the course of my journey, as a reform minded Muslim, teaches me anything about you know, how to how to de radicalize. I mean, I really don't think that I have anything earth shattering to say, but inconvenient to say, Sure, like the fact that, you know, in many cases, the jihadists or ex jihadists whom I came into touch with, simply wanted to be heard, you know, they, they wanted somebody to take an interest in, why they felt the way they did. Because not only were they rejected by mainstream society, whatever that was, in their context, whether it was in France, or whether it was in, you know, in, in Jordan, but also their own parents, who expected these young men to tow a certain line that didn't make sense for their lives. So they felt squeezed between two pressures. Two forces, neither one of which actually gave a damn about what they were thinking, and feeling. And what's weird, to I think our sensibilities in this part of the world is that when they stepped into these dens of indoctrination, you know, led by radical moms, those moms said to them in different ways. Ask anything you want. Come as you are. We accept you, as you are today. And that is a level of acceptance that they simply did not experience in any other aspect of their lives.

**Bret** 1:58:40

Okay, I think I see where you're headed. But do you want to draw the connection to January 6?

**Irshad Manji** 1:58:48

I mean, look, I don't know that I I don't know that there is a scholarly connection to be made here. I wonder, and it is truly a question. If some, even many, not suggesting most certainly not all, but some were many of the individuals who took part in that Riot made it an outlet for feeling relevant. You know, it's interesting, you know, I watched a lot of that footage, and I watched it slowly, and I watched it repeatedly. And I don't want to make too much of this spread. But I will tell you that I saw it the footage gave me a sense of deja vu, because I got the sense that there was this, this rampage for a sense of glory. As aimless as it was, because once they got there, what were they going to do? But a rampage for a sense of glory that I experienced when my own Book launches, one in Amsterdam and one in the second largest city of Indonesia was crashed or were crashed by militant jihadists. Who didn't know what to do once they arrived in the place of Amsterdam. I remember saying, you know, sit down, this is my house right now, you are my guests right now you will sit down and when I am done, you will have the chance to have your say half of them set out. The other half didn't. But I looked at the ones who were sitting down and it says, if these kids, that's what they were, at the time simply wanted guidance. You know, so Well, I don't know ultimately, what I'm, I'm implying here. But one thing I will tell you there's a, you may have heard of her, a political scientist, political psychologist, actually by the name of Karen stenner. Who has written a fantastic, fascinating book called the authoritarian dynamic. And one of the big points she makes in that book is that the way a way to curb this, what we consider some of us senseless violence, is to understand people as they are not as we want them to be, not as we wish them to be. But as they are. And that does mean, again, inviting them to tell their stories in a way that allows them to be vulnerable, which means no immediate judgments. And one last thing I'll say is that it is only when the joy hobbies who felt heard, or I should say this, it is only when jihadi whom I spoke with felt heard. And this was long before they met me or I met them that they decided to leave the cult of jihadism. Something to think about,

**Bret** 2:02:27

yeah, no, I believe me, this is, this is relevant in many ways, one of them highly personal. So the the incident that brought me to public attention, involved a protest at my classroom, 50 students that I had never met. And there is a part of that, that I remember, absolutely, vividly. The memory is as if it was yesterday, full living color, I can hear the tones and the voices. There's a point at which I'm trying to reason with these people. I'm not afraid, I know that they've got me wrong. And so I am proceeding to do, what I had not realized I had been training for 14 years to do, which was to correct a confusion that college students had in this case, the confusion was about me. And I, I got the protesters to engage me. And I started trying to make the point that I want a world in which no race is disadvantaged, that I want that as much as they do, but that I don't think they understand where they are, or what's going on or who I am. And there are these two women who engage me they clearly had a sense for what sort of monster they were confronting. And as I talked to them, I saw in their eyes, I saw them realize that the story they had been given couldn't possibly be right, whatever might be wrong with me, it wasn't what they'd been told, because that wasn't who they were talking to. They were obviously talking to somebody who was willing to engage and who didn't seem to want bad things. And the problem was not that I couldn't make progress with them, in fact, probably an hour or two, and we could have been very nearly on the same page. The problem was that there was a force that pulled them back, right? They knew that if they came back from this protest and said to the people who had sent them, something's not right here. Red doesn't sound like you told us he was going to that they were going to have a lot of explaining to do.

**Bret** 2:04:56

And that there were all kinds of penalties deployed for people who did quit. The the protesters who became rioters their narrative, those who question that were humiliated. Right. And so there are forces that prevent people from actually waking up. And so anyway, that's one of the things that we are up against. Now with respect to the January 6, protest at the Capitol, I very definitely see that it was many different people responding to intense frustration at a game that is rigged, and a story that is false. Now, they believe things, most of them, maybe almost all of them believe things, which I believe are provably false. They were acting on the basis of some of them much of the Q anon stuff, as you describe it is very cultish and built around a false understanding of the world. On the other hand, the story that was told about them, was also desperately false. And we are now coming to understand just how false it was right? So to the extent that many on the blue team think they understand there was an armed insurrection of the Capitol, it was hell bent on violence against people. And it murdered a police officer, it came prepared to engage in kidnapping. Well, that's all false. Right? The best evidence we have now is that they weren't armed, despite the fact that you might expect them to have been armed, that the ziptie handcuffs were picked up by protesters inside the Capitol, and taken away to prevent the police from using them, rather than they brought them with the intent of kidnapping anyone. And the police officer who we were told was killed, beaten to death with a fire extinguisher by protesters, apparently was not beaten by protesters. So I don't know the facts. I don't know if those facts will reverse again. But what I can say is, what you have is false stories upon false stories, resulting in people thinking they know enough to render judgments about others that in fact, they couldn't know enough about. We're all dealing with a mechanism that tells us what's true, which has demonstrated time and time again, that it is not reliable, and forces us into a a false belief that we were present that we saw it with our own eyes. And in any case, what one does about this is unclear, but you can watch it unfold in real time as people try to establish a position that doesn't get them in trouble that, you know, rescues the rescues them from the concern of their friends that maybe they don't believe the right things, people are constantly trying to find out what they can say that gets them off the hook that puts them in the right position. And that that process makes us suckers for those who wish to give us a false story about either who they are or who our enemies are. And it is putting us in grave danger.

**Irshad Manji** 2:08:23

Do you think that that a community or tribe of misfits is possible? I by definition, you know, misfits don't necessarily have enough in common to glue them together, except for the fact that they're all misfits. What could could it work?

**Bret** 2:08:52

Oh, of course, of course. And this is a long standing interest of mine. So I consider myself a misfit. I was always a misfit in school. I like the term because it does not pass judgment on whether it is you or the system, which is actually broken. Yeah, so I think misfit is a is an honorable term and one can embrace it. There is a problem for misfits gathering and teaming up. The problem being that in large measure, if you're a misfit, and you make it out the other side, you typically have a strong independent streak, you may not have a robust toolkit for partnering and those with whom you partner will be sufficiently different that you run into these self definition. You know, different glossary, that sort of problem. However, I strongly believe that the answer has to involve the Misfits teaming up that as a misfit, that's a great deal of fun, right? That actually finding other misfits it's much more interesting than grouping with people who see the world exactly as you do. And so I've I've played with two terms in this regard. One of them. I'm not sure I've ever spoken about this publicly. But you know, the the name of the podcast is the Dark Horse podcast. And it's purpose was to highlight people who, you know, the dark horse is a Benjamin Disraeli invention. It's a horse on which you do not know how to bet because it was trained in secret, so you don't know what it's capable of. Right? So dark horses come from nowhere. They challenge your expectations, et cetera. And so the idea that there are dark horses among us who should be spotlighted so that we can begin to understand what they bring to the table is great. And so, a stable of dark horses is something that the podcast was meant to discover. And the other one is a pack of lone wolves. Right. And I think these are all close neighbors to the idea of a collection of misfits. And frankly, any one of them is good enough for me. But yes, I think the Misfits have to figure out how to talk to each other because they're our only hope.

**Irshad Manji** 2:11:18

Well, Brett, I'm proud and dare I say it privileged, really, to be part of your community of misfits I've just loved our time together.

**Bret** 2:11:28

Me too. You are a true Dark Horse and

**Irshad Manji** 2:11:32

write a minute was that no, that was okay. Yeah,

**Bret** 2:11:36

sure. You could you could play that card but it's not gonna work out for you. I

**Irshad Manji** 2:11:41

have no desire to play that card.

**Bret** 2:11:43

No, I know you don't I know you don't All right. Well, this has been an absolute delight. Where can people find you?

**Irshad Manji** 2:11:52

A couple of places actually. My own website is your shed man g.com as you know, I run the moral courage project and that's at moral courage.com and of course I'm on social on Twitter. You can find me at your shed man G and go Yeah, we'll leave it there.

**Bret** 2:12:12

All right. Well, I mispronounced your name upfront your shot man Gee,

**Irshad Manji** 2:12:15

Oh, you know what? I anglicised that because you know, it's it's it's now a habit but I you pronounce it beautifully from the get go. You're showing monkey.

**Bret** 2:12:25

Oh, you're shut monkey. Okay, I did that I feel good about back, sir. All right. I will. I will get to that later today. The pat on the back. That is okay. Well, I think that's all for this episode of Darcos. It's been a delight. And I look forward to seeing the documentary that you mentioned. And our next conversation. All right. Be well, everyone. Thanks your shot.

**Irshad Manji** 2:12:51

Well, take care and stay vertical.

**Bret** 2:12:53

Indeed. Yeah. Good advice. All right. Bye now.