

The Lake of Fire: The Future of Grace

What if climate change demands not only better policy and technology, but a different moral grammar? This talk reintroduces the Hindu concept of *anugraha*—grace—as a critical concept for the humanities and social sciences, tracing it through the moral grammars of Christian thought, arguing that an anthropology of grace offers a powerful lens for understanding grace as a relational ethic rather than a theological afterthought. Drawing on South Asian traditions and everyday moral practice, the talk reframes grace as responsiveness, restraint, and care without guarantee, a counterpoint to extractive models of environmental governance. Linking ethical life to ecological crisis, it asks what it might mean to approach the earth as a gift rather than a resource, in urban India, where the burning lakes of Bangalore starkly reveal the consequences of life without grace. The talk invites a rethinking of climate ethics beyond management and mastery, toward stewardship of humility, obligation, and shared vulnerability. Offering both a diagnosis and a vision of grace for our times, the talk closes by challenging scholars across the humanities and social sciences to rethink how we think of ethics—and to ask whether our most trusted methods are adequate to the futures we claim to imagine and build.