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Asaf Sharabi

The Biography of a God

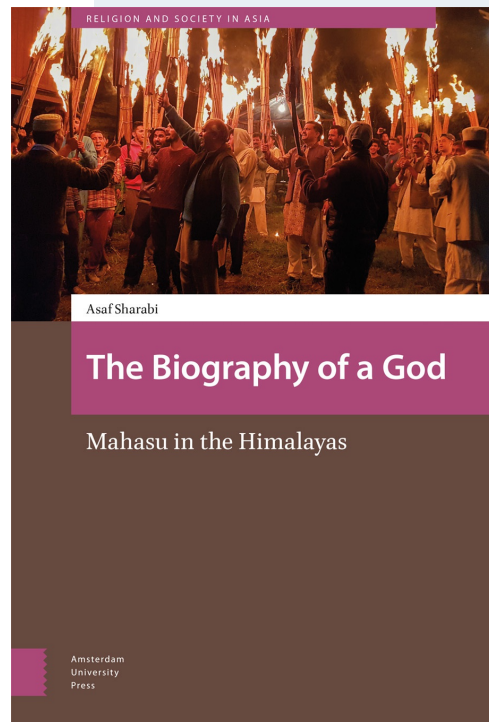
Mahasu in the Himalayas

Mahasu is the joint name of four gods whose influence is widespread throughout the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Like other deities in the Western Himalayas, they are regarded as royal gods who rule over territories and people. This book traces changes in faith and practices surrounding the Mahasu brothers, and shows how the locals understand these changes by emphasizing the dominant role of humans in the decisions of the gods. The locals are also constantly testing the authenticity of the human mediumship. Thus, the book presents the claim that the gap between local conceptions of divinity and the perceptions of anthropologists regarding gods may be narrower than we think.

The Biography of a God: Mahasu in the Himalayas is based on ethnographic research, resulting in an important contribution to the study of Indian village deities, Himalayan Hinduism, lived Hinduism, and the anthropology of religion.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Asaf Sharabi obtained his doctorate in social anthropology in 2010 from Bar Ilan University. In his doctoral thesis he explored the encounter between religion and contemporary modernity, in the context of the religious revival movement in Israel. In 2013, he undertook an ethnographic study in the Western Himalayas, a study in which he intermittently engaged to this day. The research focuses on the religious experience and changing theological perceptions relating to the image of local gods, especially Mahasu. In 2021, his research *Gods and goddesses in the Western Himalayas - a comparative ethnographic research* won a research grant from the Israel Science Foundation (ISF). His research interests include anthropology and sociology of religion, ritual healing, anthropology of gods, anthropology of Hinduism, and anthropology of Judaism.



Religion and Society in Asia

March 2023

222 pages, 27 Illustrations, black & white

Hardback

156.0 x 234.0 mm

€107.00 / £91.00 / \$122.00

ISBN 978 94 6372 665 8

e-ISBN 978 90 485 5384 6

BISAC REL032000 / REL084000 /
SOC008020

BIC HRKN / JFSR

KEYWORDS

Deities, agency, Western Himalaya

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