

Promoting spiritual intelligence in community interfaith dialogue in the Abrahamic religions

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ABSTRACT

Religion is a significant contributing factor to community level violence and acts of intolerance, which seem to be increasing among the Abrahamic faiths. Interfaith initiatives seek to enhance religious tolerance and promote peaceful coexistence, while spiritual intelligence (SI) programs seek to increase the capacity to align with the sacred and apply spiritual resources to solve specific problems. This project proposed to assess whether improving SI among members of the three faiths can promote effective community interfaith dialogue. A mixed method explanatory sequential design, employing both quantitative and qualitative data collection was used. The purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of SI training, followed by a survey of the participants' opinion of the value of the training on their ability to engage in interfaith dialogue. The goal was to demonstrate that the spiritual strengths of the three faiths can be enhanced to promote SI, which will then foster positive dialogue.

ABBREVIATIONS

ISIR Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report

ISIS Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale

IFD Interfaith dialogue

SI Spiritual intelligence

KEY WORDS

Abrahamic religions

Interfaith

Dialogue

Spirituality

Spiritual intelligence

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The goal of this research was to study spiritual intelligence in the context of community interfaith dialogue among Jewish, Muslim, and Christian congregations. The Abrahamic religions have a shared history and many common values. There are parallels between the Qur'an, the Torah, and the New Testament that guide followers in God's word, which includes an ethic of altruism, charity, and peace with specific commands to be hospitable to those of other nations or cultures (Brown, 2013: 49-50). However, passages in these sacred texts can also be interpreted in ways that justify violence against those of other faiths (Khan, 2018: 2). With recent attacks by members of the Abrahamic faiths against one another's places of worship it is becoming imperative to find new ways to heal religious differences.

The tragic massacres at the churches in Sri Lanka, mosques in New Zealand, and at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh are powerful reminders that multi-faith dialogue leading to multi-faith relationships are critical to the establishment of a peaceful world. We need to understand one another's languages and respect one another's practices in relation to the Divine. Most of all, we need to build personal relationships that embody the presence of the Divine in our world. ...if we can accept that our various religious traditions, with all their wonderful differences, flow from the same Source, then we can build relationships of mutual respect and affection and work together to heal the world (Gertmenian, 2019).

Interfaith dialogue refers to cooperative, constructive, and positive interaction among people of different religious or faith traditions that promotes understanding and acceptance and is an emerging response to address religious conflict and religious nationalism (Brown, 2013: 5). There are a variety of approaches and models, but the purpose of all interfaith dialogue projects is to enhance religious tolerance and promote peaceful coexistence (Garfinkel, 2004: 2). While there are different definitions with corresponding abilities of spiritual intelligence (SI) that will be reviewed here, an example

is provided by Emmons who describes SI as “a framework for identifying and organizing skills and abilities for adaptive use of spirituality” (Emmons, 1999: 63). Spirituality can be defined as the individual search to understand the answers to questions about our relationship to the Divine that informs the meaning and values of one’s life and relationships with others. In contrast, religious practices may be the external sign of a spiritual orientation or simply a set of culturally cohesive practices, beliefs, and customs, which may or may not include aspects of spirituality (Koenig, 2009: 284).

This project proposed to assess whether improving SI can promote effective community interfaith dialogue (IFD) among members of the three faiths. The two concepts of spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue have been studied as two separate constructs and only peripherally studied in relation to each other (Clark, Lin, Y. & Maher, 2015). Literature has shown that SI can be reliably assessed (Amram & Dryer, 2008; King & DiCicco, 2009; Wigglesworth, 2013), and that SI can be improved or developed through training methods (Mark, 2006; Wigglesworth, 2013; Esmali, Zareh, & Golverdi, 2014), and that SI can be promoted in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths (Brewer, 2008; Draper, 2009; Mark, 2015; Hussain, 2014; Esmaili, Hamid, & Golverdi, 2014; Morinis, 2014; Hanefar, Sa’ari, & Siraj, 2016).

This research assessed the relationship of spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue by promoting the development of SI, which may then positively influence community interfaith dialogue among members of the Abrahamic religions. The goal was to demonstrate that the spiritual strengths of the three faiths can be leveraged to promote SI, which can then be used to facilitate positive dialogue. Magonet provides a description of Abrahamic spiritual strengths in the parallels of the Qur’an, the Torah, and the New Testament that guide followers to adopt an ethic of responsibility, altruism, and charity towards others. This includes reaching out to acknowledge, understand, and respect each other’s dignity and humanity (Magonet, 2003: ix). Some examples from the sacred texts will be provided in Chapter Two (2.2.3).

The intended result of the research was an increased mutual understanding among participants to promote peaceful co-existence that may serve as a model in other communities. The increasing incidences of religious oriented hate-crimes has emphasized the fear and frustration that can be the result of religious differences. One

response has been for people of all faiths to reach out in support of those communities who have suffered the attacks, but also in coming together to find solutions to insoluble religious differences. Promoting spiritual intelligence among the three faiths may be a contribution to finding a solution to these differences. In her work on addressing Muslim extremism, Khan writes “The time is ripe for a fresh strategic approach. This requires peoples of all faiths to work together in good faith, pooling our insights, resources, experiences, and knowledge to solve the issue... It seems crucial that we must do so by peaceful means; for peace is the underlying and unifying spirit of all our diverse faiths” (Khan, 2018: 3).

The perspective of this study comes from the premise that the development of an inner spiritual wisdom may lead to an awareness that we are all one and part of a greater good and source of eternal love. Further, an inner experience of this love will assist us to create more just conditions for all on Earth. An additional perspective includes an international or global understanding of faith and religion. My experience of living and working in many cultures over several years including Europe, Micronesia, Asia, and Saudi Arabia have contributed to a perspective of acceptance and tolerance in working across faiths and cultures. This includes a belief in the possibility of developing the capacity to navigate the emerging global realities and challenges cooperatively and humanely, without religious or cultural dissention. Promoting spiritual intelligence that fosters positive interfaith dialogue may contribute to this goal.

1.2 Description of community partners

The community partners involved in this research included St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, the Har HaShem Jewish Congregation, and the Islamic Centre of Boulder, all located within a mile of one another on the same street in Boulder, Colorado. All three congregations have community outreach programmes and often invite one another to participate in their events. However, the focus of these events tends to be shared meals or social activism, such as an annual Walk for Peace, or presentations by noted speakers such as Regan Byrd (2018) on implicit bias, and Daisy Khan (2018) on ending Muslim extremism. Each organization has their own calendar of events with no shared planning or identified structure for participating in goal directed interfaith collaboration. There is, however, an interest in developing a more purposeful interfaith framework in the future.

Of note is the fact that the three congregations may not be representative of the entirety of their traditions, as different groups and traditions within all three faiths may not support the concept of interfaith dialogue, which will also be discussed further in Chapter Two (2.3.4).

St. Andrew has an active multifaith ministry which I have been participating in for over two years and who expressed interest in supporting this research. A slogan of the St. Andrew Multifaith Ministry is “Peace on Earth, one community at a time.” Boulder could serve as one of those communities which directly addresses religious differences to promote intelligent spirituality in a faith-based context. “Religion is defined not only by its scriptures and teachings, but by how communities across nations implement these wisdoms into their lives and marry these virtues to realities” (Khan, 2018: 66).

1.3 Literature review

The databases that have been consulted for this literature review include EBSCO, ProQuest, Nexus, JSTOR, Google Scholar, Sabinet e-Publications, and the NWU Library. Key Search words that were used included spiritual intelligence; intelligent spirituality coupled with the term interfaith dialogue. The order of the literature review includes an overview of interfaith dialogue (IFD), including different models and issues. This will be followed by a review of the literature on spiritual intelligence (SI), and then an overview of the proposed relationship of SI to IFD.

Interfaith dialogue

Religion has been a contributing factor to conflict and misunderstanding throughout history. Kratz-Mays (2008: 3) observes that with increasing globalization it is essential to include religion and religious organizations in peace-making efforts, and interfaith dialogue has emerged to promote reconciliation within the context of religious traditions. At a basic level this involves people of different faiths coming together to have conversations with the recognition that conflict resolution and increased understanding emerge with mutual tolerance and respect, which then can foster a common cause such as promoting peaceful co-existence. Cornille (2013: 1) points out the difference between non-religious dialogue and inter-religious dialogue, stating that the latter has an actively constructive element where participants engage one another from the perspective of a

distinct faith. The goals are to establish mutual understanding in conjunction with the pursuit of personal and religious growth. Religions have long-standing traditions that promote reverence for a higher reality and this spiritual element can be invoked to foster interactions with those of other faiths, that then allows participants to look beyond personal interests and aim for mutual greater good (Cheetham, Pratt & Thomas, 2013: 2).

Interfaith dialogue groups can have a variety of formats and occur at various levels, including internationally such as at the United Nations or locally at the community level, and many multifaith organizations are linked in larger networks at the national and international levels (Smock, 2002: 3). Numerous interfaith groups have been formed all over the world for different purposes. For example, the focus can include peace-making (Idowu-Fearon & Atkins, 1993; Fisher, 2000; Todd, 2007), community improvement (Wallick, 2008; Halsey, 2016), or social activism (Baugh, 2012; Scotece, 2012; Gano, 2014; Fox & Lesser, 2015), and many other topics. Interfaith groups can form around organized discussions or informal gatherings, focus on scholarly/academic debates or faith-based discussions, they can host social events, or groups can work together for a common social cause (Kratz-Mays, 2008: 4).

Whatever the purpose of the interfaith dialogue group, these programmes tend to invoke religious values that promote constructive interactions with those of other faiths. This process can then move participants toward development of empathy and even friendship and the possibility of working together for a common good. This can be understood as a material or felt benefit to the interests and well-being of all members of the group or collective. Examples may include the resolution of social issues that impact the community, developing stronger social support networks, or promoting increased safety from religious motivated violence (Patel, 2016: 9).

Elements of interfaith dialogue

Interfaith dialogue is an emerging field with a variety of research studies that have resulted in many models and approaches, as well as a variety of methods to address the challenges of interfaith interactions. Many models of interfaith dialogue incorporate principles of faith among the Abrahamic religions where it is not enough to know doctrinal and cultural differences, it is also important to learn to communicate in a constructive

manner with one another. "Interfaith dialogue is not a theological or political problem, but an organic communication process that produces interfaith meaning. The end goal is to foster understanding and mutual respect for our shared humanity" (Brown, 2013: ix). The aim is to foster dialogue that promotes understanding that will then lead to diverse religious traditions co-existing peacefully as a social norm.

Leonard Swidler, who began his work in the early 1980s, is considered one of the pioneers of interfaith dialogue (Kratz-Mays, 2008: 3; Cornille, 2013: 4). He endorses a perspective in which a willingness to engage the religious other is a positive step in expanding our own inner awareness and understanding of the world (Swidler, 1983: 12).

We need to engage in dialogue with those who have differing cultural, philosophical, social, or religious viewpoints, so to strive toward an ever fuller perception of the truth of the meaning of things. If we do not engage in such dialogue, we will not only be trapped within the perspective of our own "standpoint," but we will also not be aware of our lack...Our search for the truth of the meaning of things makes it necessary for humans to engage in dialogue. To knowingly refuse dialogue today would be an act of fundamental human irresponsibility--in Judeo-Christian-Muslim terms, "a sin" (Swidler, 1983: 16).

To Swidler (1983: 14-16) the purpose of interfaith dialogue is not to convert or persuade others to adopt a particular religious or cultural point of view, but to develop the skills of deep listening and a willingness to personally change, so all partners can learn and grow from each other's perspective. The dialogue is not meant to unify religions or develop syncretism, but to inform members so they may observe, learn from, and understand those of different faiths. The intent is not to participate in other ways of worshipping, but to maintain unique faith traditions or religious identity, while simultaneously seeking to understand persons of different faiths. Religious uniformity and agreement are not the goals, but rather collaboration that may lead to a collective good. This denotes a level of unity, co-operation, and improved understanding between different religions to promote community safety and well-being, free of acts of intolerance toward one another (Hick, 2014: 20). The purpose is to struggle against negative conditioning and to open the door for listening and to foster communication and respect so that individuals may discuss their religions with authenticity (Shafiq & Abu-Nimer, 2011: 8).

Swidler (1983: 15) proposes that there are phases of IFD, beginning with first learning about one another that then can lead to discernment of the values, faith, or religious perspective of the participants. Finally, the members can explore new ideas and meaning that mutually expands their world view. Interfaith dialogue can only occur among those who consider one another as equals (Swidler, 1996: 15; Patel, 2016: 41), and it is important to involve key members from participating religions from the beginning of the planning phases. According to Swidler (1983: 15), the first dialogue begins with the goal of acknowledging commonalities and discovering shared values and experiences, which will then create a sense of cohesiveness. The most difficult point of differences should not be addressed at first, but later in the process as the relationship and understanding develop. He states that the aim is to first develop cohesiveness among the members so that religious differences can be explored in the next phases in safety and respect, and so that differences can be cherished and celebrated. If dialogue is done in integrity by all partners while maintaining the core of one's own religion or tradition, then each may incorporate this expanded understanding within their own religious self-understanding, which can proportionately transform the individuals as well as their communities (Swidler, 1983: 24).

Swidler's framework is designed to first find common ground that can then build to deeper stages of interaction. This has been referred to as a foundational model for interfaith dialogue (Kratz-Mays, 2008: 4; Cornille, 2013: 4); however, different points of view have emerged. King (1995: 214) criticizes Swidler's model on the basis that his framework is "unabashedly Christian attempting to speak for the religions of the world ... there is no hope of arriving at real global consensus from a starting point within one tradition". King recommends inviting global representatives of the world's religions to develop a viable global ethic as a framework for interfaith interactions. "Then and only then would it become a just praxis in which to search for common ground. To this conservative Christian and his organization, non-Christian morals clearly have lesser value" (King, 1995: 214-16).

Another criticism of the model of first finding common ground is given by Heim (1995: 2) who proposes an alternative model he terms the Acceptance Model. Religious identity is an important aspect of interacting with those of other faiths, and Heim (1995: 4-5) proposes that acknowledging religious differences during interfaith interactions is critical

to maintaining and affirming a positive religious identity. Crist (2014: 4) concurs that while the model of interfaith dialogue that is based on finding common ground is an appealing approach, she believes that it can be as harmful as not having dialogue in the first place. In ignoring differences, participants are forced to keep aspects of their beliefs private and religious identity cannot be maintained. This discussion will be expanded in more detail in Chapter Two (2.2.3).

In addition to considering different models and approaches to IFD, this project was set in the context of community congregations, so it is important to also consider the research on community interfaith interactions. McCormick (2012: 4-5) proposes that congregation-based community partnerships are relevant mechanisms for employing theological belief systems to resolve conflict. He provides examples of how this multilevel model of interfaith psychology has been successful. Additional community-based models of interfaith dialogue include communication theory (Brown, 2013; Schafer, 2013) which encourage communication skills in a dialogue programme to promote interreligious empathy. Khan (2018: 4) also writes that interfaith dialogue must be started at the community level to have the most impact.

Summary of interfaith dialogue

In summary, there are models of IFD based on various theories and approaches in the spectrum of finding common ground and building relationships in stages (Swidler, 1983); first acknowledging religious differences (Heim, 1995) even unto conflict (Minn, 2010; Crist, 2014); and employing various strategies in a community and congregation level setting (McCormick, 2013; Brown, 2013; Schafer, 2013; Greenbaum, 2014). Despite the criticisms of Swidler's model it has had long standing success and has proven effective in promoting positive interreligious understanding in a variety of settings and contexts (Kratz-Mays, 2008: 6; Cornille 2013: 4). The purpose of this project is to promote spiritual intelligence, which is the positive use of spiritual abilities and resources to enhance functioning and wellbeing (Amram, 2008: 7). SI theories support positive engagement rather than argument and dissention.

Swidler's model appears to be the most conducive to support the goals of promoting SI in a community context and so was chosen over the other models. This project occurred at the community level, therefore the models that encourage positive communication and

focus on first finding common ground as a basis to build later, more in-depth discussions were used. However, aspects of working in a community setting were considered and all phases of this project were designed to ensure that the individual's religious identity and experience were acknowledged and respected throughout. Religious bias can occur when assumptions or pre-judgments are made of a person based on membership in a faith group rather than on their individual merits, or with the assumption that one faith is superior to the others. It was important to avoid presenting any religious bias and ensure that members of all three faiths felt comfortable participating in the project, and that each religion was represented accurately throughout each phase of the research.

Crist (2014: 2) observes that with technological advances and greater interconnectivity our differences are becoming more apparent, and that one of the most important questions of our time is "how can we all get along?" This research proposes that promoting spiritual intelligence in members of the three Abrahamic faiths may foster individual inner capacity for compassion and altruism, which can then support positive community interfaith interactions.

Spiritual intelligence

It is human nature to ask fundamental questions about who we are, why we are here, and to seek answers about the meaning and purpose of life. "We are driven; indeed, we are defined by a specifically human longing to find meaning and value in what we do and experience" (Zohar, 2000: 4). This innate drive to fulfil our potential has been examined by modern psychologists in the context of human intelligence. Binet developed the first widely used Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test in the early 1900s that measures cognitive, logical, and problem-solving abilities, and psychologists have continued to build on intelligence as a construct since that time (Sternberg 2001: 2). Sternberg (2001: 3-4) defines intelligence as the mental abilities necessary for adaptation, as well as the selection and shaping of environmental contexts, and includes the ability to learn or understand from experience and to adapt to new situations and experiences.

Gardner developed the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) and defines intelligence as "a set of abilities that are used to solve problems and fashion products that are valuable within a particular culture" (Gardner, 1983:4). To Gardner an intelligence is a "biological and psychological potential that is capable of being realized to a greater or lesser extent

based on the experiential, cultural, and motivational factors that affect a person” (Gardner, 1995: 202). He states that the traditional IQ test that measures logical and cognitive capacity is not representative of the full range of human potential or abilities, and that intelligence is not a unitary construct. To Gardner, intelligence is multidimensional and comprised of linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, body-kinaesthetic, and interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist facets (Gardner, 1995: 33-37). Gardner (1995: 204-207) laid out eight criteria for distinguishing an independent intelligence.

1. An identifiable core set of operations.
2. An evolutionary and historical plausibility.
3. A characteristic pattern of development.
4. Potential isolation by brain damage.
5. The existence of persons distinguished by the exceptional presence or absence of the ability.
6. Susceptibility to encoding in a symbol system.
7. Support from experimental psychological investigations.
18. Support from psychometric findings.

Relative to spiritual intelligence, Gardner commented that the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) does not deal with capabilities beyond the intellect. “MI theory is not, and does not pretend to be about personality, will, morality, attention, motivation, and other psychological constructs. Note as well that MI theory is not connected to any set of morals or values” (Gardner, 1995: 206).

Mayer and Salovey (1993: 443) also promoted the view that definitions of human intelligence are too narrow and that IQ testing ignores crucial abilities that impact successful functioning, proposing an additional emotional intelligence (EQ). Goleman (1995: 2) concurred and popularized the concept of EQ to indicate the interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities that assist in developing more positive and productive relationships. Goleman (1995: 38-39) drew from behavioural and brain research, examining the factors involved when those with high IQ do poorly in life, while those with modest IQ can excel. He cites research on the negative outcomes that a lack of EQ can produce, such as elevated levels of anxiety, depression, social isolation, anger, and impaired judgment

(Goleman, 1995: 34-36). To Goleman, EQ is a basic requirement for effective use of IQ. "People who are emotionally adept and who know how to manage their feelings well, can then read and deal effectively with other people's feelings and are at an advantage in any domain in life" (Goleman, 1995: 36). Further, when the areas of the brain that are related to emotion are damaged, the result is a diminished ability to think and ineffective cognition (Goleman, 1995: 17-18).

In 1996, Zohar and Marshall introduced the concept of spiritual intelligence (SI), also citing that intellectual, emotional, or the other intelligences are not sufficient to explain the full human potential or the deep complexity of human capacity. Zohar and Marshall interpreted SI as the intelligence of our highest motivations in a positive ethical spectrum. They indicate that qualities such as wisdom, compassion, integrity, and joy can lead to a deeper sense of meaning and purpose with improved adaptation and success in many areas of life (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 24). They proposed that SI is the central and most fundamental of all intelligences because it can help integrate the logical/rational and emotional intelligences. The different forms of intelligences can be linked to one of three basic neural systems in the brain, and the intelligences described by Gardner and Goleman are variations of basic functions that relate to specific neural arrangements. Further, SI operates from the centre of the brain unifying all other functions (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 39-45). SI contains the abilities that combine rational and emotional intelligence to reframe one's experience, transform the understanding of meaning, and then conceptualize a moral and holistic outcome. They argue that computers have high IQ and animals have high EQ, but humans have an additional ability for transformation that includes a purposeful drive towards integrity. SI allows humans to consider and then create more meaningful, moral, and ethical solutions (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 5-6).

Emmons's theories of SI developed out of his research into motivation and spirituality as an aspect of personality (Emmons, 1999: 3-5). He concurred with Zohar and Marshall that humans are capable of transformation and studied how the realization of long-term goals are related to enduring levels of happiness and life satisfaction. His research on a cognitive motivational framework of personality led to his theory of spiritual intelligence, proposing methods of enhancing psychological constructs, including religion and spirituality, to optimize human potential (Emmons, 1999: 158-59). Emmons defined spiritual intelligence as "the adaptive use of spiritual information in facilitating problem

solving and goal attainment” (Emmons, 1999: 163). He also claimed that the components of spiritual intelligence are inherent in most cultures around the world. Additional perspectives on SI will be provided in Chapter Two (2.2).

Measuring spiritual intelligence

Amram and Dryer (2008) developed and then validated the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS). They define SI as “the ability to apply, manifest, and embody spiritual resources, values, and qualities to enhance daily functioning and wellbeing” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 1). The ISIS was developed and tested across nine different religions and belief traditions for what Amram and Dryer call “an ecumenically grounded theory of SI” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 4). The assessment includes an eighty-three-item long form self-report questionnaire and a forty-five-item short form. The scale has satisfactory factor structure, internal consistency, test-re-test reliability, and construct validity. It contains twenty-two subscales assessing separate SI capabilities that are grouped into five domains: “consciousness, grace, meaning, transcendence, and truth” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 2). The scale predicted life satisfaction and correlated with existing measures of spirituality (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 1-4).

King and De Cicco (2009: 74) developed a self-report measure of SI, the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory-24 (SISRI-24), for the measurement of SI in university students in Western countries that relied on definitions of spirituality as distinct from religiosity. The authors defined spiritual intelligence as “a set of mental capacities which contribute to the awareness, integration, and adaptive application of the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of one’s existence, leading to such outcomes as deep existential reflection, enhancement of meaning, recognition of a transcendent self, and mastery of spiritual states” (King & De Cicco, 2009: 68). Wigglesworth’s model of SI was developed in the corporate setting with a focus on leadership effectiveness and job/life satisfaction. She developed a scale that measures twenty-one spiritual skills that she proposes predict spiritual intelligence, called the SQ-21. She defines SI as “the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace (equanimity) regardless of the circumstances” (Wigglesworth, 2013: 8). This model mirrors Goleman’s EQ model with four quadrants and subset skills (2013: 45-103). All three of these SI

measurement tools have been used extensively in research and validated in several settings.

Summary of spiritual intelligence

Since Zohar and Marshal and Emmons first published their theories, spiritual intelligence has become an emerging topic in numerous fields and is an ongoing focus of academic study (Noble, 2000; Vaughn, 2002; Amram & Dryer, 2008; King & DeCicco, 2009; Wigglesworth, 2013). Several authors since have found that SI fulfils the traditional requirements of an intelligence (Edwards, 2003; Hartsfield, 2003; King, Mara & DeCicco, 2012; Punia & Yadav, 2015; Bhullar, 2015; Amirian & Fazilat-Pour, 2016); as a dimension of personality (Vaughn, 2000; Koenig, 2012; Skrzypinska, 2014); in relationship to resilience and stress (Koenig, 2012; Khosvari & Nikmanesh, 2014); in the context of education and of effective work (Wigglesworth, 2006; Joseph & Sailakshmi, 2012; Maheshwari, 2015), and in the context of religion and spirituality (Amram, 2007; Ronel, 2008; Kwilecki, 2009; Albursan, et al., 2016). SI has become a useful and valid tool to predict and improve functioning in many areas of life.

In reviewing both constructs of SI and IFD, there appear to be similar goals and terms that have been used by researchers. The following section is a discussion of the connection between interfaith dialogue and spiritual intelligence in the context of the Abrahamic faiths, that then points to their relevance in this research.

The relationship of spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue in the Abrahamic religions

Several themes are important to establishing the relationship between spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue in the Abrahamic religions. This includes definitions of spirituality in the context of religion, which is then differentiated from spiritual intelligence. Next, both interfaith dialogue and spiritual intelligence are examined in the context of the three faiths to identify common themes that provide a basis for promoting SI and enhancing IFD. An overview of these topics is provided in the following section and explored more fully in Chapter Two (2.4).

Spirituality refers to the search for and experience of ultimate meaning and the sacred, while spiritual intelligence (SI) emphasizes the abilities to utilize these spiritual resources to predict functioning and adaptation (Emmons, 1999: 92). Amram and Dryer (2008: 2) found that SI can be differentiated from spirituality, spiritual experience, or spiritual belief in that SI is a construct that combines spiritual concepts with intelligence, resulting in abilities that “use spiritual resources, values, and qualities to enhance daily functioning and wellbeing” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 2). Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have a shared history and many common values. Abu-Nimer (2001: 686) writes that the Abrahamic traditions all come from the same source and regardless of the faith, it is important to see past divisions and discover the beauty of what we have in common. In the long history of conflict and dissention that continues into the present, interventions to promote mutual understanding and cooperation are critical. Ahiokhai and Asese (2013: 491-94) observe that the current religious tensions and negative polemics that have shaped interreligious relations have become a source of great scandal to many people of faith. “An unhealthy desire to eradicate other religions through violence, intimidation, and aggressive apologetics has clouded the consciousness of many religious leaders. It is urgent to foster dialogue and promote a more positive understanding of the sacred in shared religious traditions, and so establish a more positive pluralism” (Ahiokhai, & Asese, 2013: 508).

Both IFD and SI have been studied in the context of Abrahamic religions, and the constructs have been widely discussed in the literature. There are many publications, both scholarly and popular, addressing SI in the Abrahamic faiths; (Hussain, A., 2003; Kass & Lenox, 2005; Swidler, Duran, & Firestone, 2007; Draper, 2009; Boteach, 2010; Brewer, 2012; Hussain, M., 2014; Morinis, 2014; Hanefar, Sa’ari, & Siraj, 2016; Baharuddin, 2019). As well, there are several sources for addressing Abrahamic interfaith dialogue; (Magonet, 2003; Abu-Nimer & Augsburg, 2009; Pava, 2009; Shafiq & Abu-Nimer, 2011; Kayaoglu, 2015; O’Doherty, 2015). Both SI and IFD are accepted as areas of study that address and potentially resolve problems and issues related to faith and religion.

Magonet (2004: vii), the editor of a collection of essays on promoting understanding among Jews with Christians and Muslims, describes attributes that are critical to promote interfaith understanding. “The qualities of spiritual altruism from across the faiths must be developed to acknowledge, understand, and respect each other’s dignity and

humanity...when we neglect the spirit of human solidarity in the shared heritage of our faiths, we abandon our most sacred space..." (Magonet, 2004: ix). Magonet seems to be describing the need to develop SI in the three faiths. Zohar and Marshall interpreted SI as the intelligence of our highest motivations in a positive ethical spectrum. They indicate that qualities such as wisdom, compassion, integrity, and joy can lead to a deeper sense of meaning and purpose with improved adaptation and success in many areas of life. The abilities of SI include, among other qualities, the reluctance to cause unnecessary harm (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 24), which is an essential first step toward leveraging the values of religion to develop interreligious understanding and cooperation (Cornille, 2008: 11).

To Swidler (1983: 14-16), the purpose of interfaith dialogue is to develop the skills of deep listening and a willingness to personally change, so all partners can learn and grow from one another's perspective. The attributes of altruism and respect for our shared humanity in relationship to the Divine promotes effective IFD and can be compared to the abilities of SI that promote an understanding of the sacredness of life and our shared humanity (Emmons, 2000: 22). The abilities of SI include a positive life orientation which protects individuals against negative behaviours in society or in personal life, and can be shown as forgiveness, gratitude, humility, and compassion (Emmons, 1999: 164-67), which are values of the three faiths. Swidler (1983: 11) writes that the primary purpose of IFD is for each participant to learn from the other, so that s/he can change and grow. SI promotes the conscious pursuit of psychological health, not only for individuals, but for the sake of the global community (Noble, 2000: 15), and includes the capacity to extend care to and concern for the wellbeing of others including family, community, and other ethnic or cultural groups (Vaughn, 2002: 16). Clark, Lin, and Maher (2015: 332) found that training in SI promoted altruism, intercultural willingness to communicate, and the intention to help a stranger of another culture, all of which coincides with the goals of IFD.

The capacity to align with the sacred may be universally adaptive and can be assessed.... Spiritual intelligence can be applied to solve specific problems by tapping specific abilities such as using intuition, transcending rationality through synthesis of paradoxes, or in taking a holistic systems perspective to solve problems more globally. In addition to helping solve specific problems, spiritual intelligence can be applied in every moment of daily life to experience

greater meaning, and wellbeing...by exercising SI abilities such as mindfulness, presence, and equanimity (Amram & Dryer 2008: 34).

Swidler (1983: 15) proposes that participating in the process of IFD can lead to discernment of the values, faith, or religious perspective of the participants, while the members can explore innovative ideas and meaning that mutually expands their world view. Similarly, SI includes striving toward an understanding of the ultimate meanings of life and growing to our full human potential (Wigglesworth, 2013: 14), which are also common goals of the Abrahamic faiths (Swidler, 2008: 3). SI and IFD together may also provide a basis on which to understand our shared goal of striving toward God centeredness, and this shared insight may support more positive relations among the three faiths.

Emmons (1999: 12) writes that the components of spiritual intelligence are inherent in most cultures around the world. Several researchers (Emmons, 2000; Amram & Dryer, 2008; Wigglesworth, 2013; Mark, 2015) have found that practice or training may help develop some of these abilities in both secular and religious settings. Practice and training also help to develop more effective IFD (Swidler, 1970: 32; Kratz-Mays, 2008: 6). Building upon the spiritual strengths of the three faiths to develop and evaluate a training course to promote SI, which builds upon the positive religious values of each faith, may be valuable in promoting interfaith dialogue and interreligious understanding. From the synthesis of the IFD and SI literature, it follows that SI and IFD can both be strategically developed to support and leverage the success and effectiveness of each construct in a process of mutually reinforcing abilities. Improved SI may promote more effective IFD, and interfaith understating may help to develop SI. "We can only have a peaceful global community if humanity ascends to a higher level of consciousness on a collective scale, meaning that the majority of people would have to make a quantum leap of inner harmony and peace" (O'Doherty, 2015: 119).

1.4 Gaps in literature and need for the study

There were no studies or literature that were found on the direct correlation of SI and IFD. The assistance of the North-West University Librarian was requested to conduct an advanced search, and she also did not locate studies that directly connect the two constructs but did provide research articles with related topics. The potential benefit of

this research includes providing ecumenically based training modules in SI based on the values of the three Abrahamic faiths. Ecumenical in this setting refers to the study of issues across different faith traditions, not solely within a specific religion. This study aims to demonstrate the potential to promote spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic faiths, and then relate it to the positive experience of interfaith dialogue by the participants. This may provide tools for community congregations to promote SI and foster interfaith collaboration. Members of the three Abrahamic faiths may also foster individual inner capacity for compassion and altruism, which has the potential to improve mutual understanding. These cultivated abilities of SI may then be applied in support of positive community IFD, thus diminishing negative outcomes such as violence and acts of intolerance based on religion.

Many models of interfaith dialogue incorporate the principles of faith among the Abrahamic religions, where it is not enough to know doctrinal and cultural differences, it is also important to learn to communicate in a constructive manner with one another. “Interfaith dialogue is not a theological or political problem, but an organic communication process that produces interfaith meaning” (Brown, 2013: ix). Promoting SI abilities in an interfaith context may help achieve this new understanding.

1.5 Thesis

Problem statement

Religion is a significant contributing factor to community level violence and acts of intolerance, which seem to be increasing among the Abrahamic faiths. Interfaith initiatives seek to enhance religious tolerance and promote peaceful coexistence, while spiritual intelligence (SI) programmes seek to increase the capacity to align with the sacred and apply spiritual resources to solve specific problems (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 34). The problem that is addressed in this research is to determine whether employing methods to improve SI among members of the three faiths can promote effective community interfaith dialogue. Many models or paradigms to promote both interfaith dialogue and spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic faiths are addressed in the literature. However, the constructs of spiritual intelligence have not been directly examined in the context of promoting interfaith dialogue, specifically among Jews, Muslims, and Christians. There is

an opportunity to demonstrate that the spiritual strengths of the three faiths can be enhanced to promote SI, which may then foster positive dialogue.

The importance of Abrahamic interfaith dialogue has been noted by several authors (Rowe, 1999; Hussain, 2003; Swidler, Duran & Firestone, 2007; Ganzevort, et.al., 2014). However, Heft (2016: 2) questions the effectiveness of interfaith dialogue efforts among the three Abrahamic religions to date, noting the increased conflict among followers. He writes that the three faiths know very little about one another and have either kept their distance or been in active conflict. Cornille (20008: 5) also writes that relative to the long history of religion, genuine dialogue and constructive engagement is in its infancy, and that cooperative dialogue for most religions is a future promise rather than a past accomplishment.

There are several similar attributes and comparable capabilities in both SI and IFD. For example, striving toward an understanding of the ultimate meanings of life, and growing to our full human potential are aspects of SI (Wigglesworth, 2013: 14), and these same attributes are also constructive aspects of the Abrahamic faiths while engaged in positive interfaith dialogue (Kratz-Mays, 2008: 3). The problem that is addressed with this research is the lack of evidence of the causal relationship of SI and IFD in a community level effort, which may then provide results that can be extended to solve wider problems of religious intolerance.

Overview of aims and objectives.

The aim of this research is to determine whether employing methods to improve SI among members of the three faiths can promote perceived improved community interfaith dialogue and provide a model of promoting spiritual intelligence among the three faiths that may enhance SI, and then demonstrate that enhanced SI may foster positive community interfaith dialogue.

General objectives

The focus of this research is on IFD in the Abrahamic faiths at the community setting. The overall objectives of this study are to develop and employ training methods aimed at improving SI scores based on pre and post ISIS scores, followed by structured IFD that

may demonstrate a positive relationship between improved SI scores and participants perceived effective facilitated interfaith dialogue.

Specific objectives

1. Examine the relationship between SI and IFD in the Abrahamic religions.
2. Identify the common themes of SI in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and correlate them to the five domains of the ISIS and develop these into training modules.
3. Assess whether spiritual intelligence can be developed or improved with this training in a community multi-faith setting among the Abrahamic faiths based on pre and post ISIS scores.
4. Assess whether there is a relationship between ISIS scores from participants to a perceived effect on the structured IFD and if this model may have value in fostering positive IFD among the Abrahamic faiths.

Research questions

Developing the specific abilities of SI, such as using intuition, aligning with the sacred, or taking a holistic systems perspective, may also help to solve interfaith problems in targeted settings (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 34). The core question of this research is to discover if SI can be improved with training in a multifaith setting. Finally, does the training foster a perceived positive effect on IFD in the Abrahamic faiths? To validate the proposed research model this study pursues the following research questions.

Question #1: Is there a relationship between SI and IFD in the Abrahamic religions?

Question #2: Is there a correlation in the research for developing SI in the Abrahamic faiths that corresponds to the constructs of the five ISIS domains of consciousness, grace, meaning, transcendence and truth, which can then be incorporated into SI training modules?

Question #3: Can spiritual intelligence be developed or improved with this training in a community multi-faith setting among the Abrahamic faiths, based on pre and post ISIS scores?

Question #4: Do participants who received the SI training perceive that training had a positive effect on a structured interfaith dialogue that may have a wider application in the Abrahamic faiths?

1.5.4. Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research is that spiritual intelligence can be assessed and developed in a community setting among the Abrahamic faiths, and that this will enhance structured community interfaith dialogue.

1.5.5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework included a multifaith model as the basis for assessment of SI, and a theistic context for SI training. The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) assessment tool was chosen for this project because of the background research from across faiths and subsequent development of the ISIS instrument that has been validated in multi-faith settings in nine faith traditions, including Christianity, Islam, and Judaism (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 2). Dr Amram gave his permission to use the ISIS for this research and expressed an interest in the results. I also became a certified Spiritual Intelligence Coach with Dr Amram's organization, Intelligensi, after selecting this instrument and prior to conducting the project. This was done to develop more familiarity with the qualities of the five ISIS domains and to learn in depth methods of promoting SI.

In contrast to methods that focus on the secular context for promoting SI, Ronel conducted research on a theistic approach that leverages the belief in a transcendent God to develop attributes of SI (Ronel, 2008:110), which also served as a framework for this project. Studies in promoting SI in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths were used to develop an integrated training program that was correlated to the five domains of the ISIS, with five corresponding training modules to instruct participants (3.3). This was followed by a facilitated interfaith discussion based on the structure of Swidler's framework of first developing mutual understanding as a basis to move into more advanced levels of dialogue and community engagement (Swidler, 1983: 10-11). This model has been in use for over 30 years and is recognized as standard for IFD by researchers (Katz-Mays, 2008; Cornille, 2013).

1.5.6 Philosophical perspective of researcher

I am a Christian minister with advanced training in teaching spiritual practices, and have taught meditation and inner development at the Seminary of the Inner Light in Boulder, CO. I have also lived and worked in many cultures including Europe, Micronesia, Asia , and Saudi Arabia, and have studied several spiritual traditions over a period of 30 years, and so have an extensive background in working across faiths and cultures.

1.6 Methodology

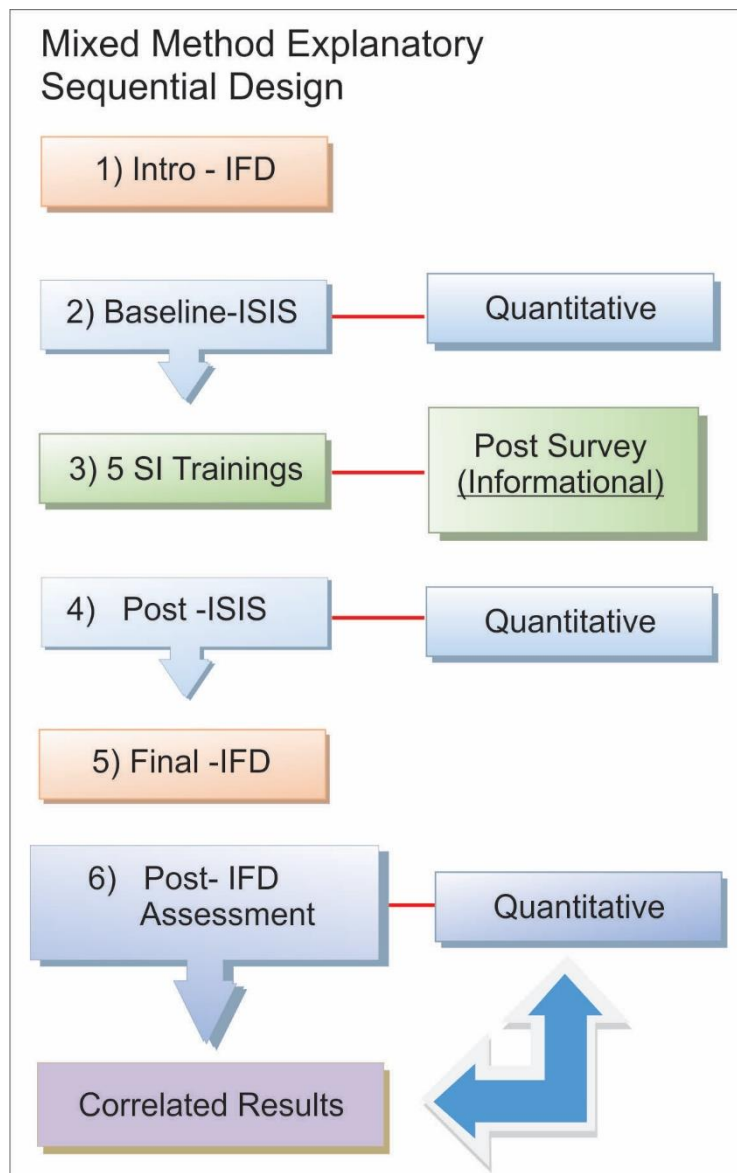
Definitions

- A. The definition of SI used in this study is “the ability to apply, manifest, and embody spiritual resources, values, and qualities to enhance daily functioning and wellbeing” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 2). SI is differentiated from spiritual belief (i.e., belief in a transcendent power or God); spiritual experience (feeling or sensation of oneness with God or expanded awareness of the unity of life); and spiritual resources which can be derived from spiritual practice, religion, or wisdom traditions.
- B. Interfaith dialogue is defined as individuals engaged in constructive conversations from the perspective of a distinct faith, to establish mutual understanding in conjunction with the pursuit of personal and religious growth (Cornille, 2013: 1).

Recruiting participants

The project was located at a community Presbyterian Church (St. Andrew) that has a multifaith ministry, and which has relationships with the neighbouring Har HaShem Jewish congregation, and the Islamic Center of Boulder, all located within a mile of one another. The St. Andrew leadership was supportive of further developing their interfaith engagement which may lead to meaningful community interfaith collaboration. Two introductory modules on SI and IFD were developed and first presented at adult education classes at St. Andrew to introduce the project to Christians and foster interest in the project.

Research design



A mixed method explanatory sequential design, employing both quantitative (ISIS) and qualitative (post IFD subjective survey) data collection was used for this project (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 221-24). The purpose was to evaluate both the effectiveness of SI training measured through pre and post ISIS scores, followed by an assessment of the participants' opinion of the value of the training on their ability to engage in interfaith dialogue. This involved a three-phase data collection process in which the participants' ISIS scores were compared pre- and- post training and compared to determine if SI had improved. The second qualitative phase included a facilitated interfaith dialogue, which was evaluated with a

questionnaire with a series of open-ended questions. The overall intent of this design was to assess if the qualitative assessment from the IFD questionnaire demonstrated a relationship to the quantitative set of results from the participants' ISIS scores. The intended outcome of the research was to provide a process for training SI in multi-faith settings, which may then have value for interfaith dialogue.

The expectation of the design was that these independent variables can be used in a sequence of 1) introductory IFD, 2) baseline ISIS, 3) five SI training modules, 4) post ISIS, 5) final facilitated dialogue, 6) followed by an assessment of participants' opinion of the value of the training on their ability to engage in dialogue. This sequence was intended to

demonstrate the relationship between training in SI and SI scores, followed by a positive correlation of improved SI to subjective assessment of the value in interfaith dialogue.

Measurement tools

The short form Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) developed by Amram and Dryer (2008) was used as a pre and post assessment tool (Appendix A). The ISIS forty-five item short form, self-report instrument has shown satisfactory factor structure, internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and construct validity. It contains twenty-two subscales assessing separate SI capabilities grouped into five domains: “consciousness, grace, meaning, transcendence, and truth” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 2). The ISIS predicted satisfaction with life and correlated with existing measures of spirituality (Amram & Dryer 2008: 1- 8). The five domains of the ISIS served as a framework to develop an SI development program that was derived from collation of literature on promoting SI in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The exercises and training approaches that are common denominators in all three traditions and aligned with the five domains, served as a guide in developing a training programme to promote SI (3.3).

Quantitative and qualitative assessment tools

A pre-assessment ISIS was offered, and after participants had participated in the five SI training sessions, a post assessment ISIS was offered. In the ISIS instructions, participants were asked to indicate the frequency of behaviours over the past six to twelve months using a six-point Likert Scale with the following labels: rarely or almost never; very infrequently; somewhat infrequently; somewhat often; very frequently; always or almost always. Participants were encouraged not to leave items blank and use their best guess if they were unsure about a particular item. ISIS reverse scored items are recoded such that high scores on all items theoretically provide evidence for spiritual intelligence. Cases with missing data were excluded from analysis when the missing data were required and included in analysis when the data were not required.

Participants were offered SI classes in the five domains and then asked to provide feedback on the training sessions. The results of the post-training surveys were informational only and used for improving the elements and content of the classes and were not tied to the ISIS score results. Participants were asked for their feedback after

each of the five training sessions with an online survey tool (Survey Planet at <https://surveyplanet.com/>). The survey was not required and participants were asked to respond if they wanted to provide feedback or had suggestions. The online survey tool had three questions and a comment box with survey selections that included a five-point Likert Scale graded from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Upon participant completion of the training modules, and collation of pre- and post-ISIS scores, there was a facilitated interfaith dialogue that participants were asked to evaluate via a survey based on their opinion of the value of the SI training, and the benefit in promoting a positive discussion among member of the three religions.

Development of SI training

There are numerous references and texts for developing and promoting SI in a theistic context, including multi-religious settings (Buzan, 2001; Wolman, 2001; Wigglesworth, 2013); for the Jewish faith (Pava, 2009; Boteach, 2010; Morinis, 2014); in Christianity (Brewer, 2008; Draper, 2009; Mark, 2015); and for Muslims (Hussain, 2014; Esmaili, Hamid, & Golverdi, 2014; Hanefa, Sa'ari, & Siraj, 2016) (Appendix B). A theistic context assumes that the participants had some faith in a transcendent God, and this planning assumption was used in developing the SI training models. The training modules developed for this research were based on the five major domains from the ISIS, in conjunction with a synthesis of literature on methods to develop SI from the three Abrahamic religions.

A theistic context (Ronel, 2008) and a multifaitth measurement instrument of SI (Amram & Dryer, 2008) does not indicate a syncretism of the three faiths, but it does support the idea that religions across traditions cultivate a universal set of qualities that are adaptive, and that can increase functioning and wellbeing (Amram & Dryer 2008: 34). People have these abilities to a greater or lesser degree, and practice or training might help them to develop some, or all these abilities. During the process of multiple interviews with participants across several faiths, Amram and Dryer (2008: 8-9) isolated five broad domains as nearly universal across the spiritual traditions.

1. **Consciousness:** Development of refined awareness and self-knowledge, featuring intuitive trans-rational knowing, mindfulness, and spiritual practices.

2. Grace: Living in alignment with the sacred, manifesting trust in and love for life that is based on gratitude, beauty, and joy.
3. Meaning: Experiencing significance in daily activities through a sense of purpose and a call for service, including in the face of pain and suffering.
4. Transcendence: Going beyond the separate egoic self into an interconnected wholeness, including a holistic systems worldview, and the nurturing of human relationships through empathy, compassion, loving-kindness.
5. Truth: Living in open acceptance, forgiveness, curiosity, and love for all that is (all creation), including respect for the wisdom of multiple spiritual traditions (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 4).

A thematic analysis of sources for promoting spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic faiths were compared for common elements and then integrated with the five domains of the ISIS to develop five modules to promote SI. The assessment of the literature and development of the training modules will be presented in Chapter Three (3.3).

Method of obtaining results

The intention was to begin at the grassroots level by inviting interested members from the three congregations to participate in this project. A consent form approved by the NWU Ethics Board (IRB), was signed by volunteer participants. Then the forty-five-item short form Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Survey (ISIS) was administered, and confidentially scored prior to the first class. Following participation in a series of five classes designed to promote SI from the perspective of the three religions, a second ISIS assessment was offered and confidentially scored to assess whether the training had had an impact on SI scores. The relationship of SI to interfaith dialogue was qualitatively assessed through facilitation of an interfaith dialogue, followed by asking the participants to complete a subjective post-assessment survey. Each stage of the project was conducted on a virtual platform and in accordance with public health recommendations.

Interpretation of results

All data was analysed using Microsoft SPSS v28 statistical analysis software (https://spss.en.softonic.com/SPSS_28). The quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the distinct stages of the project and the results were analysed separately, after which the two sets of data were correlated by comparing the quantitative and qualitative results. The outcomes of the ISIS scores indicating a potential improvement in SI scores, were compared to post IFD impressions of the value of the training, to determine whether there may be a positive relationship.

The ISIS tool in this project is based on self-report Likert-type scale models. Likert-type items generally fall into the ordinal measurement scale. Descriptive statistics recommended for ordinal measurement scale items include a mode or median for central tendency and frequencies for variability (Boone & Boone, 2012: 4). Amram and Dryer (2008: 15) used univariate statistics (including mean and standard deviation), frequency histograms, and box plots for all variables to explore potential problems, violations of assumptions, and differences in interpretation of the formative ISIS tool. The score for each scale (or subscale) is simply the average of the item scores after correcting for reverse scored items (i.e., the score of a reverse scored item of six becomes one, five becomes two, while a two becomes five, etc.). Similarly, each sub-scale score is the average of the items on the sub-scale after correcting for reverse scored items.

Challenges to the study

With mixed method studies, attention must be paid to credibly establishing the relationship of the quantitative and qualitative results, as the two data bases cannot be directly compared (Creswell & Creswell 2018: 223). For this reason, it was recommended that the participants remain consistent throughout all phases of the study, and this consideration was explained while recruiting participants.

Boulder is a unique community set in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and is identified as the most educated city in the U.S., with the highest number of residents with bachelor's degrees, and a high percentage with master's and doctoral degrees (McGauley, 2017). According to *National Geographic*, Boulder is the healthiest and happiest city in the U.S. and is also quite affluent (Byers, 2017). The average family income is higher and the cost

of living is forty-two percent higher than the national average. It also tends to be socially and politically liberal with many groups promoting environmental and social activism. This demographic was overall reflected in the membership of the three congregations, indicating that the results of this study may be different if it had been conducted in a more typical community. Also, the only demographic information that was collected in this study included age, gender, and faith tradition, and did not include cultural or ethnic indicators, which may also influence the development of SI and engagement in IFD.

Expected outcomes

The ISIS was found to have reliability, internal consistency, and temporal stability across demographics of gender, age, and religion, and it was expected that this would be true for ISIS scores across the participants from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 23-24). Mean scores of ISIS studies showed that women and those of the older age ranges of both genders tended to score higher, and this correlation was also anticipated to be proven across the three faiths. It was expected that following participation in the five training modules, that ISIS scores would statistically improve across the three faiths, relative to age and gender. It was also expected that this outcome would translate into prediction of positive correlations between improved ISIS scores and subjective positive evaluation of structured IFD.

1.7 Ethical considerations

All surveys and training modules were submitted for approval by NWU promoters prior to implementing the research design to ensure that research processes met all ethical and Independent Review Board (IRB) considerations. All participants received written and verbal explanations of the risks and benefits of participation in this project, prior to signing for their consent to participate. To maintain confidentiality, privacy, and strict anonymity, no identifying information was collected from participants, who were asked to generate a five-digit code based on: 1) the first two letters of their middle name, 2) two-digit month of their birth, and a letter denoting their faith tradition. This individualized code was used to locate a personalized profile for the questionnaires and assessment tools that were then evaluated and compared.

Potential risks for participants and precautions

This study fell into the low-risk category and did not present physical risk factors, provided that the sessions were conducted in accordance with public health recommendations. Psychologically, there was the potential of an emotional response to receiving a spiritual intelligence score that was different than participants may have anticipated or that did not match their self-perceived spiritual strengths. It was important that participants understood that the purpose of the ISIS score was to provide a profile of key strengths, with areas for opportunities for growth. The instrument relies on self-report data and is not an absolute measure of an intelligence and does not indicate that one is more or less spiritually capable. It is intended to provide guidance in areas that one may wish to work on or learn more about. The online ISIS provided a relative score in each competency, with recommendations on how to apply the competency, and methods to further develop SI abilities.

There was also the possibility of an interfaith misunderstanding developing during the facilitated interfaith dialogues. In contrast to methods that focus on a secular context for teaching SI, studies in promoting SI in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths were used to develop integrated training modules to promote SI. This was followed by a facilitated interfaith discussion based on the structure of Swidler's framework of first developing mutual understanding aimed at positive dialogue and community engagement, and thereby diminishing possible interfaith misunderstanding. The following is a framework outlining the risks with the correlated precautions.

FRAMEWORK OF RISKS AND PRECAUTIONS	
Potential Risks	Precautions
There may be a psychological response to receiving a spiritual intelligence score that is different than participants may have anticipated.	An introductory class was given that explained the purpose and use of the ISIS scores. It was important that participants understood that the purpose of the ISIS score was to provide a profile of key strengths, with areas for opportunities for growth. The instrument relies on self-report data and is not an absolute measure of intelligence and does not indicate that one is more or less spiritually capable. It is intended to provide guidance in areas that one may wish to work on or learn more about. The online ISIS provided a relative score in each competency, with recommendations on how to apply the competency.
There may be a possibility of an interfaith conflict or misunderstanding developing during the facilitated interfaith dialogues.	In contrast to methods that focus on a secular context for teaching SI, studies in promoting SI in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths were used to develop an integrated training to promote SI from a theistic perspective. This was followed by a facilitated interfaith discussion that was based on the structure of Swidler's framework of first developing mutual understanding as a basis to move into a positive dialogue before discussing differences. This mitigated the possibility of conflict developing among the faiths.
Due to the pandemic, all public health recommendations were observed to ensure participants were not exposed to infection.	Public health recommendations were observed to mitigate possible exposure to an infectious disease, and all sessions were offered on a virtual platform.

Benefits for participants

The potential benefits of this study for participants outweighed the possible risks. The direct value of this research included providing pre- and post-scores of the SI assessment, and an opportunity to further develop inner spiritual capacity in selected areas. This study also provided an ecumenically based training in SI based on the values of the three Abrahamic faiths. By demonstrating the potential to promote spiritual intelligence among the three faiths, participants had the opportunity to further develop their own skills of SI to improve functioning in many areas, as outlined earlier. This also led to a positive experience of interfaith interactions to promote further cooperation and understanding among the faiths. Participants also had the opportunity to foster an individual inner capacity for compassion and altruism, which may have led to improved

mutual understanding and cooperation among the religions. Indirect benefits could be that the cultivated abilities of SI can be applied in support of positive community interfaith interactions, thus diminishing negative outcomes, such as violence and acts of intolerance based on religion. This research may also provide tools for other community congregations to promote SI and interfaith dialogue.

FRAMEWORK OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT BENEFITS	
Direct Benefits	Indirect Benefits
The value of this research includes providing pre- and post-scores of the SI assessment and an opportunity to further develop inner spiritual capacity in selected areas.	These cultivated abilities of SI may be applied in support of positive community interfaith interactions, thus diminishing negative outcomes, such as violence and acts of intolerance based on religion
The participants were given an ecumenically based training in SI based on the values of the three Abrahamic faiths to further develop their own skills of SI and improve functioning in many areas.	By demonstrating the potential to promote spiritual intelligence among the three faiths, this research may provide tools for other community congregations to promote SI and positive interfaith dialogue.

1.8 Chapter summary

Religion is a significant contributing factor to community level violence and acts of intolerance, which seem to be increasing among the Abrahamic faiths. Interfaith initiatives seek to enhance religious tolerance and promote peaceful coexistence, while spiritual intelligence (SI) programmes seek to increase the capacity to align with the sacred and apply spiritual resources to solve specific problems. This project proposed to assess whether improving spiritual intelligence (SI) can promote effective community interfaith dialogue (IFD) among members of the three faiths. The two concepts of spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue have been studied as two separate constructs and only peripherally studied in relation to each other (Clark, Lin, & Maher, 2015).

Literature has shown that SI can be reliably assessed (Amram & Dyer, 2008; King & DiCicco, 2009; Wigglesworth, 2013), that SI can be improved or developed through training methods (Mark, 2006; Wigglesworth, 2013; Esmali, Zareh, & Golverdi, 2014), and that SI can be promoted in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths (Brewer, 2008; Draper, 2009; Mark, 2015; Hussain, 2014; Esmaili, Hamid, & Golverdi, 2014; Morinis, 2014;

Hanefar, Sa'ari, & Siraj, 2016). Many models or paradigms to promote both interfaith dialogue and spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic faiths are addressed in the literature. However, the construct of spiritual intelligence has not been directly examined in the context of promoting interfaith dialogue, specifically among Jews, Muslims, and Christians. There is an opportunity to demonstrate that the spiritual strengths of the three faiths can be enhanced to promote SI, which may then foster positive dialogue, which is the problem that this research addressed.

A mixed method explanatory sequential design, employing both quantitative and qualitative data collection was used with participants from three Abrahamic congregations in the same community. The purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of SI training, followed by a survey of the participants' opinion of the value of the training on their ability to engage in interfaith dialogue. The goal was to demonstrate that the spiritual strengths of the three faiths can be enhanced to promote SI, which will then foster positive dialogue. The intended result of the research is increased mutual understanding among participants to promote peaceful co-existence that may serve as a model in other communities.

The perspective of this study comes from the premise that the development of an inner spiritual wisdom may lead to an awareness that we are all one and part of a greater good and source of eternal love. Further, an inner experience of this love will assist us to create more just conditions for all on Earth. The increasing incidences of religious oriented hate-crimes have emphasized the fear and frustration that can be the result of religious differences. Abu-Nimer (2001: 686) writes that the Abrahamic traditions all come from the same source and regardless of the faith, it is important to see past divisions and discover the beauty of what we have in common. It is not enough to know doctrinal and cultural differences - it is also important to learn to communicate in a constructive manner with one another. "Interfaith dialogue is not a theological or political problem, but an organic communication process that produces interfaith meaning" (Brown 2013: ix). Promoting SI abilities in an interfaith context may help achieve this new understanding.

Chapter Two will provide further information and discussion of both constructs of SI and IFD, specifically in the Abrahamic religions. There will be further discussion of the different models and approaches to IFD, and a more in-depth analysis of the research on SI in the

three religions. Several themes that are important to establishing the relationship between spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue in the Abrahamic religions will be further examined, including definitions of spirituality in the context of religion, which is then differentiated from spiritual intelligence. Chapter Two will also provide examples to demonstrate the parallels between the Qur'an, the Torah, and the New Testament that guide followers in God's word, which includes an ethic of altruism, charity, and peace with specific commands to be hospitable to those of other nations or cultures, as well as passages in these sacred texts that can also be interpreted in ways that justify violence against those of other faiths (Khan, 2018: 2).

CHAPTER 2

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AND SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide additional information on the themes introduced in the first chapter which are important to establishing the relationship between spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue in the Abrahamic religions. Interfaith dialogue (IFD) (2.1) and spiritual intelligence (SI) (2.3) will both be examined in more detail in the context of the three faiths. Definitions of spirituality in the context of religion will be differentiated from spiritual intelligence. Finally, there will be further discussion of the relationship of the two constructs to identify common themes that will provide a basis for promoting SI and enhancing IFD in a community setting. The goal is to provide the framework for promoting SI and facilitating IFD that is proposed in this research.

Religion can be understood as an explanation of the ultimate meaning of life and for mankind to live accordingly (Swidler, 1983: 11). The Abrahamic faiths have a common heritage with parallels in the Qur'an, the Torah, and the Old and New Testaments that point to the sacredness of life and a shared humanity. The Abrahamic sacred texts guide followers to adopt an ethic of responsibility, altruism, and charity towards others, and includes reaching out to acknowledge, understand, and respect each other's dignity and humanity (Magonet, 2003: ix).

Armstrong (1993: 5-6) observes that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are early monotheistic religions that have historically shaped and altered the conception of God. She traces the history of the ways that God is perceived and experienced from the time of Abraham to the present, with the Jews' gradual transformation into monotheism. She then reviews the formation of Christianity and Islam, also with the belief in one God which grew out of the Jewish tradition. However, she claims that the three religions interpreted their understanding of God and subsequent beliefs and practices based on the social and political milieu of different times, which later led to divisions and misunderstanding among the three faiths. Despite the differences, Armstrong claims that the universal theme of compassion is the single thread running through each faith. "Compassion is summed up

in the Golden Rule, which asks us to investigate our own hearts, discover what gives us pain, and then refuse under any circumstance to inflict that pain on anyone else” (Armstrong, 2011: 4). The sages and prophets from each tradition promoted an ethic of compassion and altruism with instructions to show benevolence to strangers and have concern for all. However, there are texts that have also been interpreted in ways that justify violence and aggression toward those of other faiths, and to justify acts of intolerance towards other religious groups.

Passages from the sacred texts of the three religions give instructions for good will and charity toward others, while others seem to be a justification for violence. The following list demonstrates some examples.

JUDAISM

A. Peace and Good Will

- “When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7).
- “...But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace” (Psalms 37:10).
- “... that you will do us no harm, just as we did not harm you but always treated you well and sent you away peacefully. And now you are blessed by the Lord” (Genesis 26:29).

B. Violence

- “...all that are able shall go forth to war in Israel” (Numbers 1:3).
- “And I will vent my wrath on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies” (Isaiah 1:24).
- “...you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. But you shall utterly destroy them, ...as the Lord your God has commanded you...” (Deuteronomy 20:10-18).

ISLAM

A. Peace and Good Will

- “O people! Behold, we have created you from a male and a female and have made you into nations and tribes so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him. Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware” (Qur'an 49:13).
- “God does not forbid you from being good to those who have fought you or driven you from your homes, or from being just towards them. God loves those who are just” (Surat al-Mumtahana: 8).
- “Had God willed, He would have made you a single community, but He wanted to test you regarding what has come to you. So, compete with each other in doing good. Every one of you will return to God and He will inform you regarding the things about which you differed” (Surat al-Ma'ida: 48).

B. Violence

- “You may fight in the cause of God against those who attack you, but do not aggress. God does not love the aggressors” (Qur'an 2:190).
- “You may kill those who wage war against you, and you may evict them whence they evicted you. Oppression is worse than murder... If they attack you, you may kill them. This is the just retribution for those disbelievers” (Qur'an 2:191).
- “Slay the idolaters wherever ye find them, arrest them, besiege them, and lie in ambush everywhere for them... Prophet! Make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites! ... Hell shall be their home, an evil fate” (Qur'an 9:5).

CHRISTIANITY

A. Peace and Good Will

- “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).
- “Jesus said, “love your neighbour as you love yourself” (Mark 12:31).
- “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Luke 6:31).

B. Violence

- “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.... “ (Matthew 10:34-35).
- “Do you think I came to bring peace to earth? No, I tell you, but division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three” (Luke 12:51-52).
- “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelations 21:8).

The meaning, interpretation, and application of these sample texts are interpreted and held sacred by members of each tradition and may not be justly criticized or interpreted by those of other faiths. To do so could imply a singular and superior understanding of the ultimate truth, thus providing the grounds for resentment, argument, or dissention. This seems to present a potential impasse for successful dialogue. However, the constructs of pluralism may offer a promising framework in which to promote the goal of mutual understanding among those with differing interpretations of their sacred texts. Religious pluralism generally means that diverse religious traditions can and should peacefully co-exist as a social norm (Rowe, 1999: 139). The concept of pluralism implies that one's own religion or denomination does not contain the only source of truth, and that the values and traditions of other religions also have merit. It also denotes a level of unity, co-operation, and improved understanding between different religions to promote more positive relationships (Hick, 2014: 20).

While religious pluralism supports peaceful co-existence between members of different religions or denominations as an accepted social standard (Larson & Shady, 2009: 3), it can be contrasted to exclusivism, inclusivism, and universalism. Exclusivists believe that only their religion is true, and that other religions are not. Inclusivists believe that one's own religion is most relevant, but may not be the only source of truth, accepting the value in other religions. An inclusive model of dialogue promotes a method for all partners to understand each other's position, even if they do not agree (Meister, 2010: 33). While

Universalists believe that all religions have value and may contain some aspect of theological truth. In some Christian denominations universalism can also signify the belief that all people will eventually be saved by Christ (Meister, 2010: 34).

When exclusivists engage in interfaith dialogue it tends to be as a means to convince others of the merit of their own faith. Inclusivists also maintain a religious bias toward their own faith over others, even though they are open to understanding the differences. In the context of this project pluralism is the most successful framework for interreligious dialogue based on the assumption that all religions have equal value (Larson & Shady, 2009: 3). Huang (1995: 132) states that there are also different aspects of pluralism that are helpful to understand when engaging in dialogue. One aspect occurs when different religions are seen as unique expressions of a universal truth, so the intent of dialogue is to engage the religious other in a realization of a common divinity. Another type of pluralism occurs when it is understood that religions are fundamentally different, so the intent of the dialogue is to understand the differences and develop a positive acceptance in spite unique beliefs of each group. The latter type of pluralism was the framework that was used in this project as the most conducive to promoting SI and positive dialogue, while still acknowledging the fundamental differences of each faith.

Larson and Shady (2009: 7) state that interfaith dialogue is crucial in a society with numerous traditions and cultures, but that pluralism needs to go beyond mere tolerance. They propose there is another framework for pluralism that can foster recognition of a common humanity and shared community responsibility, while maintaining unique religious identity and boundaries. The goal is to go beyond tolerance and mere coexistence to develop respect for faith communities and individual believers in the process. “We are each not only a member of a particular community of belonging, but also a citizen of the world, and as such we have obligations to others beyond our kith and kin. One such obligation is to be kind, even hospitable, to ‘religious strangers’ so that we might learn from them” (Larson & Shady, 2009: 1). Armstrong also writes that compassion can provide a solution to the many differences that religious communities must address.

“We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous, and dynamic force in our polarized world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend differences, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological, and religious

boundaries. Born of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity” (Armstrong, 2011: 22).

Swidler (1983: 11) promotes interfaith dialogue as “a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, where the primary purpose is for each participant to learn from the other so that s/he can change and grow”. A positive attribute of this process is to know one’s own tradition as a basis to comprehend the wisdom from a different tradition. This model provides the foundation for a healthy pluralism, where engagement can lead to understanding the religious other without a threat of loss of one’s own faith. Gertmenium (2019) writes, “The paradox is that the more deeply we become committed to our own particular traditions, the more open we will become to the traditions of others. By contrast, if we are insecure in our own faith, we will feel threatened and may attack the faith of others. Multi-faith conversation and relationship are agents of hope and vehicles for justice.”

Swidler’s (1983: 13) model of IFD was chosen for this project as the most promising for successful dialogue in the context of promoting spiritual intelligence. It is based on a pluralism that goes beyond mere tolerance and moves toward mutual understanding, while maintaining individual faith traditions. This can potentially move interreligious groups to interdependence and cooperation toward a common goal of compassion and justice for each group. Promoting an awareness of spiritual intelligence in the context of dialogue may also foster an awareness of the positive aspects of the three faiths, and of the sacred that is held in common. Based on an ecumenical theory of spiritual intelligence, Amram (2007: 24-25) proposes that there is not one unifying cosmology across spiritual traditions, but that most spiritual traditions develop a set of qualities that are adaptive and increase functioning and wellbeing. He gives the example that Christians may align with the sacred through Jesus, Muslims through Allah, and Jews may do so through the Torah, but the capacity to align with the sacred is universally adaptive which he equates with spiritual intelligence.

“Christianity, Islam, and Judaism ...and other beautiful and profound spiritual paths can all lead us to the sacred. They can all be righteous paths, but they can also lead us astray. What interfaith initiatives teach us is that it is not the path we walk, but how we walk our path that counts” (Greenbaum, 2014: viii). The next section will provide more information

on IFD among the three faiths including similarities and differences, which may assist in the development of a framework for positive interaction in the context of different religious beliefs.

2.2 Interfaith dialogue in the Abrahamic religions

This section will provide more information on IFD including historical perspectives and different models introduced in the first chapter. Finally, there will be a review of the literature pertaining to IFD among the three faiths, including the differences within traditions and the commonalities among the three faiths.

Historical perspective of interfaith dialogue

Some historical landmarks in interfaith dialogue include the formation of the Parliament of World Religions in 1893, which was an organized international gathering of religious leaders. This group has met numerous times since its inception and most recently met virtually in 2021 (Fisher, 2000: 4). In 1948 the United Nations (U.N.) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Articles 18–21 sanctioned constitutional liberties that include religious, spiritual, public, and political freedoms (Cornille, ed., 2013: 7). The World Council of Religious Leaders is an independent body that was formed to support the goals of the United Nations and is made up of thought leaders from faith traditions that support the U.N. in resolving critical global problems. Subsequent formal interfaith groups have convened to develop interventions in areas of conflict. In 1965 when the Appeal to Conscience Foundation was founded by Arthur Schneier, comprising a group of high-level clergies representing Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians, as well as Jewish and Muslim faiths. The primary approach of the Foundation is to reach out as a neutral third party to religious leaders in areas of conflict and facilitate interfaith communication.

In 1990 Eck developed the Pluralism Project at Harvard University that was later expanded to national and international interfaith initiatives. Then the Interfaith Alliance was formed in 1994 to address the legal limitations on religious freedom in the U.S. As of 2016, the Interfaith Alliance has 185,000 members made up of seventy-five faith traditions. In an essay on the historical development of inter-religious dialogue, the Wiley-Blackwell text (Cornille, ed. 2013: 11) lists over forty interfaith organizations,

national and international that have formed since 2001 and the September 11th attacks on New York City. Many of these new organizations include Muslim groups for the first time.

Models of interfaith dialogue.

Interfaith dialogue is an emerging field, with a variety of research that has resulted in various models and approaches, as well as a variety of methods to address the challenges of interfaith interactions. Leonard Swidler, who began his work in the early 1980s, is considered one of the pioneers of interfaith dialogue (Kratz-Mays, 2008: 3; Cornille, ed., 2013: 4). He endorses a perspective in which a willingness to engage the religious other is a positive step in expanding one's own inner awareness and understanding of the world (Swidler, 1983: 12). Other advice includes taking care not to compare personal ideals to other's practices, and to allow each partner to define her/himself and their religion. Care must be taken not to tell another what they believe or what their religion entails, and to listen with an open mind with no fixed assumptions about differences and traditions. Self-awareness of one's own beliefs and personal responses is necessary for a successful interfaith understanding, while never judging another's perspective, or blaming another for personal anger or negative reactions. A key skill is to observe differences with sympathy and compassion, while still validating one's own experiences, values, and beliefs (Swidler, 1983: 16). Swidler proposes four dimensions of interfaith dialogue:

- 1) **Dialogue of the Head** - is a cognitive or intellectual process where members of different faiths learn about one another with the goal of increasing understanding.
- 2) **Dialogue of the Hands** - includes working together in practical ways to improve the community.
- 3) **Dialogue of the Heart** - is the progressive outcome of the first two types of dialogue, in which the participants express deeper levels of feelings and their authentic experience that may include differences and conflicts.
- 4) **Dialogue of Holiness** - occurs through communication aimed at recognizing that we are all spirit-bodies searching for the good, the holy, the true, and the beautiful,

and are seeking to find meaning in our purpose in relationship to God (Swidler, 1983: 10-11).

As noted, Swidler's (1983: 15) model of IFD was chosen for this project as the most supportive for developing spiritual intelligence in the context of dialogue. He proposes that there are phases of IFD, beginning with first learning about one another that can lead to discernment of the values, faith, or religious perspective of the participants. Then the members can explore new ideas and meaning that mutually expands their world view, and finally when a relationship has been established, the members can explore their unique understanding of the sacred with a feeling of safety, not dissention.

As mentioned, a criticism of the model aimed at finding common ground is given by Heim (1995: 2), who proposes an alternative model he terms the Acceptance Model. Religious identity is an important aspect of interacting with those of other faiths. Heim (1995: 4-5) proposes that acknowledging religious differences during interfaith interactions is critical to maintaining and affirming a positive religious identity. However, this should be done without asserting superiority or a singular access to God by any one group. Heim recommends that during the process of dialogue the interfaith group engages religious differences, even to the point of conflict and argument, which he believes are the inevitable results of bringing different faiths together. Heim proposes that these differences do not have to be reconciled and are key to maintaining religious identity. To Heim, religions seek different ultimate ends and affirming this difference is the point of the dialogue (Heim, 1995: 12).

Religious differences are also stressed in the model of ontological pluralism (Min, 2010: 63) in which interfaith dialogue begins with the acknowledgment of irreconcilability as a fundamental core of interacting with the religious other. In this model, the tendency towards a pluralism that promotes finding a common intellectual truth and an idealized uniformity (Eck & Swidler), should be replaced with an acknowledgement of irreducible differences, which do not have to be wholly understood but rather transcended

Crist (2014:4) concurs with Heim that not all religious differences are reconcilable. Instead, by coming to an understanding that variant beliefs have ultimately distinct end-goals, dialogue can be encouraged without having to resort to conversion attempts, competition for access to the divine, or the sacrifice of aspects of religious identity for the

sake of finding some common ground. To Crist, this is a positive step toward bringing people together in relationships while making room for distinct religious identities. In her study, Crist (2014: 61) observes organizations that use the two models and concludes that the Acceptance Model is most conducive to maintaining religious identity and promoting dialogue, while a focus on accommodation practices can reduce identity complexity and encourage homogeneity. Crist does concede that conducting interfaith dialogue based on the Acceptance Model or ontological pluralism is not an easy process, but contends that if religious differences are not mentioned, reflected upon, or confronted when working together to achieve a common goal, “what has interfaith been about?” (Crist, 2014: 67).

Cornille (2013: 2) also observes that no two religions are ever perfectly compatible, so the exchange and discussion of religious views will inevitably result in some level of disagreement and the need to defend one’s own beliefs and traditions. Dialogue among religions involves a delicate and often difficult balance between commitment to one’s own tradition and an openness to another. Most religions are convinced of the superiority of their own teachings. However, dialogue implies a receptivity, even an attitude of humility about one’s own understanding of the truth, coupled with a receptivity and openness to learning about other perspectives (Cornille, 2008: 5).

In addition to considering different models and approaches to IFD, this project is set in the context of community congregations, so it is important to also consider the research on community interfaith interactions. McCormack (2012: 4-5) proposes a multilevel model for addressing interfaith contact, suggesting that congregation-based community partnerships and theological belief systems are relevant mechanisms to resolve conflict, and provides examples of how this multilevel model of interfaith psychology has been successful. Other community-based models of interfaith dialogue include communication theory (Brown, 2013; Schafer, 2013) that encourages communication skills in a dialogue programme to promote interreligious empathy. Communication models of IFD include skills that are taught and evaluated in a culturally sensitive and ethical manner, with community participants as co-researchers. Recommendations include promoting experience and skill practice in active listening, while focusing on commonalities instead of differences.

Like Brown, Greenbaum (2014: 34) also offers practical interfaith paradigms that can be implemented at the congregation and community level. His focus is to provide an approach for pastors and religious leaders to develop a common form of worship, while still honouring individual religious and spiritual traditions. He proposes a more spiritual focus of the interfaith group, with a common liturgy, governance, and community structure across faiths. Khan also writes that interfaith dialogue must be started at the community level to have the most impact (2018: 4), and Eck's work on religious pluralism stresses the importance of local interfaith initiatives as a foundation for building effective interfaith understanding.

While there are a variety of approaches, the underlying purpose of all interfaith dialogue projects is to enhance religious tolerance and promote peaceful coexistence. The importance of Abrahamic interfaith dialogue has been noted by several authors (Swidler, 1995; Magonet, 2003; Swidler, Duran & Firestone, 2007). Ramadan (2009: 4) writes the Abrahamic traditions all come from the same source and regardless of the faith we follow, it is important to see past what divides us and discover the beauty of what we have in common. He writes that eventually all different spiritual paths lead to the human heart and religion provides an explanation of the ultimate meaning of life and ways to live accordingly. To Ramadan, in the long history of conflict and dissention that continues into the present, interventions to promote mutual understanding and cooperation are critical.

Despite the value of interfaith dialogue, it is not universally accepted by all denominations within the three faiths, and some of the distinctions will be covered in the next section. The three faiths at times have different perspectives on interfaith dialogue, as well as among the different denominations or groups within Christianity, Judaism, and Islam (Kratz-Mays, 2008: 2). Given that different denominations also have altering views on IFD, the distinctions between the many different groups may be perplexing for those of other faiths, or even among the different denominations of the same faith.

Islamic perspectives of interfaith dialogue

Hussain (2003: 8) writes that interfaith dialogue has been an integral part of Islam from the beginning and that Islam would not have developed if it had not been for an interfaith perspective. "From his first revelation for the rest of his life, Muhammad was engaged in interfaith dialogue and pluralism has always been important to Islam." He provides several

examples from the life of Mohamed where he engaged with and supported those of other faiths. Hussain (2003: 252) also writes that Islam has historically encouraged dialogue, particularly among Jews, Christians and Muslims who are considered People of the Book. He quotes traditional texts that encouraged this interaction, such as, "O people! Behold, we have created you from a male and a female and have made you into nations and tribes so that you might come to know one another...Behold, God is all-knowing, all-aware (Qur'an 49:13). This ethic is a part of the very foundational principles of our faiths: love of the One God, and love of the neighbour" (Hussain, 2003: 254). However, Hussain writes that despite Islam's history of pluralism and interfaith dialogue, Muslims are still coping with different ways of interpreting conflicting passages in the Qur'an that support interfaith engagement, while others can be used to justify exclusion. For example, conservative Muslim groups such as the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir reject the concept of interfaith dialogue, stating that it is a western tool to enforce non-Islamic policies in the Islamic world (Abu-Nimer & Augsburg, 2009: 157).

Kayaoglu (2015: 236) observes that many Muslim leaders are now advocating interfaith dialogue with Jews and Christians to help develop a common moral understanding on pertinent social issues, such as Islamophobia or religiously motivated violence. There is also an attempt to demonstrate willingness to engage with other faiths to counteract negative stereotypes held after terrorist attacks and the pervasive negative views of Muslim extremism that has been applied to all Muslims, especially in the West. Kayaoglu observes that in the last two decades, several Muslim states and civil society groups have engaged in interfaith dialogue, but this may be a strategy to signal their moderate stance to powerful others who are concerned with Islamic radicalization and violence, and so they may have different [political] motivations than the other religions' interfaith efforts (Kayaoglu, 2015: 243).

Jewish perspectives on interfaith dialogue

Jewish groups share a common history, the same language for prayer, and use the same holy texts that allow those of different cultures and world views to adopt a unique identity as Jewish (Brill, 2012: 2). Historically, Jews believe that they were chosen by God to enter into a covenant with him and this carries specific responsibilities and obligations. This includes shepherding God's plan for humanity and to conduct their lives in accordance

with the values laid out in the Torah (Brill, 2012: 23-25). However, there is also acceptance that God has a relationship with other people and that Jews and non-Jews each have their own unique relationship with God. A traditional story of Hillel the Elder, a first century Jewish sage, illustrates this ethic of reciprocity. When asked by a student to recite the whole of the Torah while standing on one leg, Hillel answers, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. This is the whole of Torah; the rest is the explanation. Go and learn" (Brill, 2012: iv).

However, different Jewish traditions have changing views on interfaith dialogue. Conservative Judaism tends not to endorse IFD, while the Modern Orthodox movement allows narrow exchanges on social issues but advises caution in discussion of doctrine. Reforming Judaism is a liberal denomination that emphasizes the evolving nature of Judaism, and values Jewish ethics over ceremony. They promote an ongoing search for truth and knowledge which is derived from reason and experience, and not solely from the Torah. The reconstructionist view is that Judaism is a progressively evolving civilization rather than a religion, and Jewish law is not considered normative and binding, but is instead seen as the basis for the ongoing evolution of meaningful Jewish practice (Karesh & Hurvitz, 2005: 417). Building positive relations between Jews and members of other religious communities has been an integral component of Reformed and Reconstructionist Judaism since they formed in the nineteenth century. Both encourage interfaith dialogue but require an awareness of the range of Jewish issues on subjects such as mission and the holy land (Schneier & Shamsi Ali, 2013: 42). Mangonet (2003: 3) writes that the nature of Jewish experience for the last century places Jews at the centre of issues that affect the whole of society. He writes that it is the particular responsibility of Jews who are at the liberal or reform end of the spectrum of Jewish religious practice to be at the forefront of dialogue with other traditions.

Christian perspective on interfaith dialogue

Traditional Christian doctrine teaches that Christ is God's sole revelation for humanity, so the value of inter-religious dialogue is often understood as performing acts of compassion and caring for others in a community, but the individuals are considered potential converts to a salvific faith in Christ (Brewer, 2010: 7). Historically, the Roman Catholic Church may be considered critical of interfaith dialogue as harmful to church authority and devaluing

the divinity of Christ by placing Christianity on the same footing as religions that worship other deities (Samartha, 2015: 15). However, there is an emerging approach in which theologians and pastors engage in interfaith dialogue as participants and learners, not as converters. The aim of this approach is to develop tolerance for the many paths to God and to work collectively across faiths for a greater good (Swidler, Duran, & Firestone, 2007:12; Samartha, 2015:16).

Berger (2016), a protestant sociologist, sees benefits in the pluralistic approach to IFD based on a sociological model. He states that there is rarely consensus on any social issue and the norm is to not expect everyone to hold the same beliefs or support the same social or political systems. Pluralism denotes freedom of choice in social interactions which can also apply to faith traditions by allowing religious institutions to voluntarily interact in ways that are comfortable for each. He states that pluralism allows individual believers and religious communities to define the core of their faith separately, while allowing others to do the same so they can then engage in dialogue with the religious other while remaining true to their core beliefs. However, Berger (2016: 39) argues that one can reject interfaith dialogue on moral grounds in certain cases. An example he gives is that of a dialogue with imams who use theology to legitimate terrorist groups, saying such discussions ought to be avoided so as not to legitimate a morally repugnant theology.

Wink, Dillon, and Prettyman (2007: 321-335) conducted a longitudinal study over sixty years with mainline protestants, Roman Catholics, and conservative protestants to investigate the relationship among church centered religiousness and spiritual seeking. They cite a large body of research that demonstrates a strong positive relationship between church involvement and authoritarianism, which may accompany traditional prejudicial and derogatory beliefs toward outgroups. They also distinguish between authoritarian and humanist religion, in that there is a stronger relationship between fundamental religiosity and authoritarianism, and less so in more liberal churches. They defined religiousness as church attendance and importance of religion in everyday life, and spirituality as practising meditation, prayer, and spiritual seeking outside of organized religion. They also found that both religiousness and spiritual seeking are positively related to concern for others; however, they found a polarization in relation to authoritarianism, with the religious respondents positively related to authoritarianism, and

spiritual seekers showing a negative association. Spiritual seekers valued independence and self-determination, over the control of church or political authority. This polarization has the effect of accentuating political differences along the conservative/liberal axis that may have implications for IFD. Those with a liberal framework may be open to participate with the religious other from a pluralistic approach of acceptance and equality, whereas those who adopt an authoritarian religious framework may be less inclined to see the value of interacting with those of other faiths (Wink, Dillon, & Prettyman, 2007: 333).

Another perspective on Christian IFD comes in the form of the moderate Lutheran protestant tradition. Based on the Biblical concept that we are all created in the image of God, Mahn (2014: 8) writes that Christians can offer respect and hospitality to those of other religions based on our common humanity without condemning the beliefs of another person. Most Christians believe that salvation is not earned but given by grace, and as God has shown mercy, so grace should be offered to others. However, Mahn (2014: 8) points out that American Christians tend to want to give aid which can create an unequal relationship of giver and receiver, where the giver has the upper hand. He points out that true hospitality means walking side by side in partnership and equality. "In the Gospels we see a pattern of Jesus repeatedly being with others, as he eats with and visits with a wide variety of individuals, many of whom are not insiders. He shows compassion and provides assistance, but he also accepts invitations into their homes and receives their hospitality" (Mahn, 2014: 12). Mahn also states that Christians may feel uncomfortable when they interact with persons of another religion from a wish not to offend, especially if little is known about the other religion, while another source may be theological uncertainty. It is helpful to remember that each participant in the dialogue may feel the same discomfort in the beginning and so an open-minded approach of acceptance may help quiet the discomfort of all partners (Mahn, 2014: 13).

Distinctions between Jewish/Christian and Jewish/Muslim dialogue

A distinction can be made between dialogue among Jews and Christians and among Jews and Muslims, each with unique social, cultural, and historical implications. There is millennia old dissension between Jews and Christians that began with the persecution of Jews in the early centuries of Christianity that was based on the belief that the Jews crucified Jesus, denying that he was the Messiah. This resulted in centuries of

antisemitism, segregation, and displacement of Jews from the predominantly Christian led society (Yaakov, 2001: 181). After World War II and the horror of the Nazi Holocaust, liberal Christians began a movement to improve relationships between the two faiths that has continued to build and deepen. There has been significant support for the State of Israel from Western countries resulting in improved Jewish-Christian relations. However, Yaakov (2001: 182) writes that interfaith dialogue is important to some Christian leaders but is not a mainstream effort and tends to occur among clergy of the two faiths and less so at the community level. There are still fundamental protestant and Roman Catholic groups that hold onto pre-twentieth century attitudes and prejudices toward Jews, and not all Jewish groups have forgiven or accepted the need for reconciliation with Christians. "Interfaith dialogue has brought about significant improvement in understanding among the two faiths, but the realities of Christian-Jewish relations have remained fragile and only time will tell how many older wounds have been healed" (Yaakov, 2001: 189).

Feisal (2011: 57-58) writes that Jewish-Muslim dialogue tends to be less developed and relatively new compared to Christian-Jewish interactions for several reasons. There is a long history of strained relations between Jews and Muslim, especially in countries influenced by the Ottoman Empire where Jews were ostracized. In modern times a major factor in the difficult relations is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Since the 1960s there have been international peace groups that have sponsored Middle East talks, some political and others led by clergy, that has opened the door for Muslim/Jewish dialogue that is aimed at restoring geopolitical balance. There have also been initiatives at universities in Israel and the West aimed at restoring peace based on scholarship and praxis. However, both Jewish and Muslim communities tend to be divided internally over whether dialogue is needed and if the other group is trustworthy (Feisal, 2011: 62). The more liberal Jewish congregations tend to be amenable to dialogue with Muslims and may support a two-state solution to the conflict. However, Islam has not divided into communities based on the same criteria as Judaism, so it is difficult to compare differences based on a liberal-conservative framework. Muslims of Arab descent that have been directly affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are less inclined to reach out to Jews, compared to groups from other countries (Feisal, 2011: 58-62).

In a qualitative survey of Palestinians and Israelis, O'Doherty (2015: 76) found inconsistencies in responses on both sides of the conflict. Both groups hoped or believed that the relationship could be improved, but neither side indicated that they were willing to participate in joint community activities or formal efforts to promote cultural understanding between the two groups. His conclusion is that they tend to view each other as a political problem, not as neighbours or individuals whom social relations could be formed (O'Doherty 2015: 78). "Neither know how they are supposed to interact with one another and are uncertain how to respond to suggestions for improved relations. There appears to be a psychological barrier between the two cultures that needs to be deconstructed before interventions to restore positive and productive relationships, and hence peace, can be attained" (O'Doherty, 2015: 102-3). He also observes that compared to Western society, which has tended to move away from the fundamentalist Judeo-Christian tradition, Islamic cultures are more religious and still identify itself with foundational Islamic traditions, even experiencing a reunion and resurgence with the traditional spiritual tenets of the Qur'an (O'Doherty, 2015: 113).

Khaykin (2011: 1-3) observes that Jewish-Muslim relations have had periods of conflict, as well as historical periods of peaceful coexistence, cultural exchange, cooperation, and profound mutual respect. He proposes that the mystical forms of both traditions that are directed toward the inner, direct experience of the divine are the foundations of the earliest forms of both religions. "Jewish mysticism and Islamic Sufism share complex cosmology, teleology, and hermeneutics, with a way of looking at the world with a sacred humanism that can foster profound respect for the other by recognizing the Oneness that unites all beings" (Khaykin, 2011:2). Rabbi Marc Schneier and Imam Shamsi Ali co-authored a book titled *The Sons of Abraham* (2013) and write that, "by reaching a fuller understanding of one another's faith traditions, Jews and Muslims can realize that they are more united than divided in their core beliefs. By their fuller understanding, they became defenders of each other's religion, denouncing the twin threats of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and promoting interfaith cooperation" (Schneier & Ali, 2013: vii).

Description of the three congregations participating in research

Understanding these political and historical implications was important in working with the three congregations of this project. All three tend to be socially progressive, but profess

a normative theology for their faiths, which will be explained further. The community tends to be affluent and highly educated across the three congregations, but each has unique characteristics. St. Andrew and Congregation Har HaShem are predominantly Caucasian with a wide range of politically conservative and liberal members. Congregation Har HaShem is active in political support of Israel, while members of the Islamic Center are aware of recent anti-Muslim hate crimes in the U.S. and have added extra security measures to their campus as a result.

There have been instances of religious oriented violence in Boulder, evidenced by a fire started at Har HaShem in 2018 by unknown groups. In 2020 a Muslim man went into a grocery store about two miles from the three congregations and opened fire with a gun killing six people. It was not clear if the crime was religiously motivated, however it raised concerns about Muslim extremism in the community. A more detailed description of each congregation is provided below.

The three congregations participating in this project tend to teach a normative, moderate doctrine within their faiths, but each tends to be socially liberal. All three congregations have a strong commitment to social justice and often work together to address community issues. Examples include mutual support for the local homeless shelter and homeless resettlement programmes, an annual community Walk for Peace, support for immigrants released from U.S. detention and refugee resettlement initiatives, and others. The Marshall wildfire in late December 2021 destroyed a thousand homes in South Boulder. All three congregations had members who were affected, and each worked with one another to provide support and housing for those who had been displaced, regardless of faith.

The Islamic Center of Boulder (ICB)

The Islamic Center of Boulder was founded in the late 1970s by a group of students at the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU Boulder) and has about one hundred- and fifty- members CU Boulder has historically been a leading graduate school in areas of the sciences such as engineering, biology, chemistry, physics, and math. Many ICB members are originally from other countries and were recruited to teach at CU Boulder or to work for a professional firm, so it is a more multinational congregation than the other two. Many of the female members are also professionals and not all choose to cover their heads in

public gatherings, although most do. The Islamic Center of Boulder welcomes visitors of all backgrounds and provides information about Islam with a robust community outreach program. They sponsor numerous events that provide a framework for community social interaction, information exchange, and friendship with members from the community, including movie screenings at the university, lectures by popular authors, and a communal meal at ICB on Friday nights. They have an active outreach programme aimed at improving community relations and the understanding of Islam.

Members of St. Andrew and ICB have attended one another's worship service, taught at one another's adult education classes, and their youth ministries have participated in over-night outings together. I have been invited to Ramadan celebrations at ICB and invited to members' homes to celebrate Eid. The relationship with Congregation Har HaShem is not as interactive; however, members do work together on social causes, such as the three congregations work collectively to address homelessness in the community and to promote voter registration (<https://bouldermuslims.com/>).

Congregation Har HaShem

Congregation Har HaShem is of the Reformed Jewish tradition and has about three hundred members. Their website states that "We create meaning in our lives through Jewish practice. We celebrate together and lift each other when we have fallen with acts of generosity and kindness. We are inspired to realize our human potential in the image of the Divine, and we work to make the world more just." They identify themselves as a caring community, a spiritual center where ancient traditions are revitalized and reaffirmed to seek a connection to the holy, a place to grow through study of Spiritual Texts and practice, and a voice for justice. The congregation addresses social issues such as poverty, the environment, human rights, and collaborates with other groups in the community to make positive social change. They are also committed to the vitality, peace, and well-being of Jewish people in all countries. They often sponsor meetings of the Interfaith Alliance and invite other congregations and community members to participate (<https://www.harhashem.org/>).

The Interfaith Alliance promotes "religious freedom by championing individual rights, promoting policies that protect both religion and democracy, and uniting diverse groups to challenge extremism" (Interfaith Alliance Website, <https://interfaithallianceco.org/>).

They sponsor community events to work with local legislators and government agencies. The Boulder Interfaith Alliance engages many congregations and the community on the grass-roots level, sponsoring events to defend religious freedom on local political and public issues (<https://interfaithallianceco.org/>).

2.2.4.3 St. Andrew Presbyterian Church

St. Andrew is a member of the Presbyterian Church of the USA [PC (USA)], which is the more socially liberal Presbyterian denomination and has about two hundred members. In 2010 the General Assembly of PC (USA) adopted several social justice initiatives, including ecological initiatives, world hunger programs, support for homelessness, and LGBT issues. PC (USA) allows for the ordination of both men and women including non-celibate homosexuals, and does not teach that Scripture is inerrant. They hold that abortion can be morally acceptable though it ought to be an option of last resort. As of 2011, the PC (USA) no longer excludes partnered Gay and Lesbian ministers from the ministry and permits same-gender marriages.

The St. Andrew banner on their website reads: “Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. May prayer feed your actions, and may your actions feed the world.” The Church believes that advocacy is part of discipleship and as followers of Christ, they are called to support public policies that eradicate poverty, racism, violence, discrimination, and inequity. Advocacy work has focused on support for voter participation, employment rights for Colorado farmworkers (immigrants), anti-gun violence initiatives, and support for environmental causes. Following the death of George Floyd in the U.S., St. Andrew leaders voted to make the church a more active advocate for racial justice. They developed a preaching relationship with a Pastor of Colour, offered 6-week training on racial bias, and encouraged all church committees to uncover and change procedures or processes that perpetuate systemic racism. The congregation also recently provided substantial support for an extended family of Afghani refugees . (<https://www.standrewboulder.org/worship>).

Summary of interfaith dialogue

Garfinkel (2004: 5) writes that “When it does its job well, religion offers an alternate vision of reality. It insists that the current reality of violent conflict is not the only possibility.

Religion gives people food for their imagination, and the ability to consider another possibility...Interfaith peacebuilders commit themselves to nonviolent alternatives to resolving the differences.” However, Heft (2016: 28) questions the effectiveness of interfaith dialogue efforts among the three Abrahamic religions to date, noting the increased conflict among followers. He writes that the three faiths know very little about one another and have either kept their distance or been in active conflict, such as with the Israelis and Palestinians. A collection of essays prepared by the Elijah Interfaith Academy in Israel addresses these challenges across the Abrahamic faith traditions. They propose a model of religious leadership in which the faiths work together instead of in isolation, and Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leadership jointly honour the shared wisdom of each tradition. The goal is to find solutions from the across the spectrum of social and political challenges and dispel the impression that religion is a source of division, not harmony (Goshen-Gottstein, ed., 2016: 8).

Karadag (2016: 1391) studied the spirituality of nations proposing that the application of models of spiritual and national understanding has the potential to find the appropriate middle ground between nationalism, religion, and globalization. He proposes several strategies that can increase national and religious understanding and cooperation for the betterment of all, not just a few or a single group. He writes that diversity is a God created gift and fostering an understanding at the community and personal level can be a shared sacred undertaking. A poem from the Thirteenth Century Persian poet Rumi provides a summary for this section.

“What shall I do, O Muslims?

I do not recognize myself...

I am neither Christian, nor Jew,

Nor Magian, nor Muslim.

I am not of the East, nor the West,

not of land, nor the sea....

I am neither of earth nor water,

neither of wind nor fire.

I am not of this world, nor the next,

not of heaven or purgatory,
My place is the placeless,
my trace is the traceless.
I am neither of dark, nor of light.
I have put duality away and
seen the two worlds as one.
It is not the body, nor is it the soul,
for I belong to the heart of love”

(Rumi, Trans Helmiski, 1998: 56)

2.3 Spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic religions

It is human nature to ask fundamental questions about who we are, why we are here, and to seek answers about the meaning and purpose of life. “We are driven, indeed we are defined, by a specifically human longing to find meaning and value in what we do and experience” (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 4). As early as ancient Greece these fundamental questions have been considered. In the *Republic*, Plato makes observations about the true philosophic nature.

...[it] has knowledge of every reality ...with a clear model in the soul to look at that which is most true, and so establish here on earth lawful notions about things beautiful, just, and good.... Such nature contains a love of truthfulness, wisdom, and striving for balance in all aspects. ...There is no share of meanness, pettiness, or cowardliness, as these are incompatible with a soul that longs to grasp the divine and human in its totality (Grube, trans., 1974: 142-4).

Since Plato, many philosophers, theologians, and scientists have considered ultimate questions about the purpose and meaning of existence. This innate drive to fulfil our potential has been examined by modern psychologists in the context of human intelligence.

As stated in Chapter One, Gardner developed the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) in 1983 and defines intelligence “as a set of abilities that are used to solve problems and

fashion products that are valuable within a particular culture” (Gardner, 1983: 4). To Gardner an intelligence is “a biological and a psychological potential that is capable of being realized to a greater or lesser extent because of the experiential, cultural, and motivational factors that affect a person” (Gardner, 1995: 202). He states that the traditional IQ tests that measure logical and cognitive capacity is not representative of the full range of human potential or abilities and that intelligence is not a unitary construct.

In 1996, Zohar and Marshall introduced the concept of spiritual intelligence (SI), also citing that intellectual, emotional, or the other intelligences, are not sufficient to explain the full human potential or the complexity of human capacity. Zohar and Marshall interpreted SI as the intelligence of our highest motivations in a positive ethical spectrum. They indicate that qualities such as wisdom, compassion, integrity, joy, etc., can lead to a deeper sense of meaning and purpose with improved adaptation and success in many areas of life (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 24). They proposed that SI is the central and most fundamental of all intelligences because it can help integrate the logical, rational, and emotional intelligences. All the intelligences can be linked to one of three basic neural systems in the brain, and the intelligences described by Gardner and Goleman are variations of basic functions that relate to specific neural capacities. Further, SI operates from the centre of the brain, unifying all the other functions (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 39-45). SI contains the abilities that combine rational and emotional intelligence to reframe one’s experience, transform the understanding of meaning, and then conceptualize a more moral and holistic outcome. SI allows humans to consider and then create more meaningful, moral, and ethical solutions (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 5-6).

Zohar and Marshall’s (2000: 22) model of SI proposes ten indications of high spiritual intelligence: (1) flexibility, (2) self-awareness, (3) the capacity to face and use suffering, (4) the capacity to face and transcend pain, (5) the quality of being inspired by vision and values, (6) reluctance to cause unnecessary harm, (7) the tendency to see the connection between diverse things, (8) tendency to ask why, what if, and to seek answers, (9) the facility to work against convention, and (10) servant leader (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 22). They also propose that SI can be developed and cultivated resulting in a more positive outlook, increased compassion for others, and greater satisfaction with life (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 34).

Emmons' theories of SI developed out of his research into motivation and spirituality as an aspect of personality (Emmons, 1999: 3-5). He concurred with Zohar and Marshall that humans are capable of transformation and studied how the realization of long-term goals are related to enduring levels of happiness and life satisfaction. His research on a cognitive motivational framework of personality led to his theory of spiritual intelligence from which he proposed methods of enhancing psychological constructs, including religion and spirituality, to optimize human potential (Emmons, 1999: 158-59). Emmons defined spiritual intelligence as "the adaptive use of spiritual information in facilitating problem solving and goal attainment" (1999: 163). SI is the intelligence that contributes significantly to positive life orientation, which protects individuals against non-adaptive or negative behaviours in society or in personal life. He characterized SI as five distinct abilities: (1) the capacity for transcendence, (2) the ability to enter into heightened spiritual state of consciousness, (3) the ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of the sacred, (4) the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems in living, and (5) the capacity to engage in virtuous behaviour such as showing forgiveness, gratitude, to be humble, and to display compassion (Emmons, 1999: 164-67). Emmons also claimed that the components of spiritual intelligence are inherent in the majority of cultures around the world (1999: 12).

Nobel's (2000: 14-21) research supports Emmons' model of SI and adds two additional core abilities including, (1) the conscious recognition that physical reality is embedded within a larger, multidimensional reality with which we interact, consciously and unconsciously, and (2) the conscious pursuit of psychological health, not only for ourselves but for the sake of the global community. Vaughn (2002: 16-20) also proposed that SI includes the capacity to extend care to and concern for the wellbeing of others, including family, community, and other ethnic or cultural groups. According to Wink and Dillon (2002: 81) SI is built through the accumulation of separate experiences where individuals increasingly experience an expanded commitment to engage in actual spiritual practices. Kass and Lenox (2005: 186) proposed a perspective similar to Noble on the relationship between SI and living fully, proposing that people with greater SI tend to have a better ability to utilize their potential in life and therefore were able to live life more fully. In addition, people with high SI were found to have characteristics similar to those of people with overall good psychological health.

However, there are also arguments against Emmons' theories of SI. In a review of Emmons' book, *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns* (1999), Wink (2000: 258) criticizes Emmons' discussion of the relationship between spiritual striving, wellbeing, personal integration, and the quest for meaning, citing that his results are derived from a small sample of college undergraduates and two community-based settings. Wink also observes that Emmons' survey tool tends to ignore the distinction between a personal inner spirituality and expressions of organized religion, which could impact his findings that SI is an intelligence. He does commend Emmons for opening research on religion, spirituality, and personality, which Wink believes requires more in-depth study (Wink, 2000: 259).

In 2000, Emmons published an article asking the question "is spirituality an intelligence?" He presented his research and rationale for proposing why SI meets the eight criteria for an independent intelligence outlined by Gardner. He then invited researchers from different perspectives to comment. In response, Gardner (2000: 59) proposed that the constructs of morals and values could potentially be included under the category of an existential intelligence which he describes as "individuals who exhibit the proclivity to pose and ponder questions about life, death, and ultimate realities" (Gardner, 2000: 61). He did not endorse the concept of a spiritual intelligence, questioning if the construct can be measured with validity. He did express an interest in understanding what is meant by spirituality and the human capacity for transcendence and suggested that this deserves discussion and further scientific study. Gardner did not rule out the possibility of spirituality being added as an intelligence at some future time, but only with sufficient scientific validation which he believed was lacking.

Mayer (2000: 52-57) described Emmons' thesis as reasonable and plausible but meriting further examination with more formal and rigorous analysis, with a need for more precise definitions to distinguish between spiritual intelligence and spiritual consciousness. He cites that the specific constructs of the relationship of consciousness, cognition, emotion, and motivation need to be studied in relationship to religion and spiritual consciousness, and these relationships must be tested and validated before spirituality can be considered an intelligence (Mayer, 2000: 56). In another response to Emmons, Kwilecki (2000: 36-43) a theologian, presented a case study in which a subject met the criteria for SI outlined by Emmons, but concurrently had several indicators of psychological instability and

excessive religious ideation leading to social dysfunction. However, she also concluded that Emmons' theories merited further examination.

Edwards (2003: 49-52) further suggested that SI could be accepted as an intelligence only if it could be proved to be, (1) autonomous from other forms of intelligence, (2) useful to resolve problems that are specifically spiritual, and (3) different from simple knowledge about spirituality. Koenig, McCullough, and Larson (2000: 45) also question the validity of research findings that showed a relationship between spirituality and mental health, as spirituality was measured in terms of psychological well-being or positive personality traits, which are not discreet measurements of spiritual constructs, and like Gardner argues that they could be part of an existential wellbeing factor.

Skrzypinska (2021: 500) asks "if we can unquestionably say that SI exists and that it plays an essential role in the sphere of spirituality and help in the process of searching for the meaning of life?" Skrzypinska (2021: 516) provides an extensive review of the literature on SI and concludes that there is no empirical evidence for a coherent model of SI as a useful tool for finding the meaning of life and that more empirical, conclusive studies are needed. Teixeira-Pinto, et.al., (2023: 7) also found that there are numerous studies validating the benefits of spiritual intelligence programs, but more research is needed to determine the long-term outcomes. The authors also state that there is a need to standardize SI training protocols.

Evidence of neuro-sourced capabilities of spirituality

An interesting aspect of spiritual intelligence is the research on spirituality as a genetic and/or neurobiological trait. Gardner (1995: 203) states that Multiple Intelligences (MI) Theory is neutral on the question of heritability of specific intelligences and the MI paradigm is based on the concept of genetic-environmental interactions. However, he was interested in and open minded about the then emerging research on neurobiological evidence that spirituality may be a genetic or neurally sourced trait (1995: 203).

Ramachandran and Blakeslee (1998) studied spirituality by using transcranial magnetic stimulation in specific areas of the brain and then measured the results with magnetoencephalography (MEG) brain scans. His team of researchers found that "a part of the limbic system, a cluster of cells located in the front of the thalamus at the centre of

the brain, and the temporal lobes are involved in religious experience and a feeling of connection to God” (Ramachandran & Blakeslee, 1998: 175). Davidson and colleagues (2003: 564-70) found that those who trained in mindfulness meditation exhibit significantly greater activity in the prefrontal cortex even while not in meditation. Lazar and colleagues (2005: 1993-97) also found that mindfulness meditation practice is associated with increased cortical brain thickness, showing brain regions of the right anterior insula, right middle and superior frontal sulci were thicker among the meditators compared to matched controls.

In 2010, neuroscientist Andrew Newberg and psychologist Mark Waldman published *How God Changes Your Brain*, which outlines extensive research demonstrating how spiritual beliefs and experiences affect brain function. They found that consistent prayer and meditation can permanently change numerous structures and functions in the brain which can influence values, the way one perceives reality, and slows down the aging process (Newberg & Waldman, 2010: 41-50). They also found that contemplating a loving God rather than a punitive God reduces anxiety and depression, with increased feelings of security, compassion, and love. They also state that while fundamentalist religions can be personally beneficial, they may generate prejudice motivated by extreme beliefs that can permanently distort some functions of the brain (Newberg & Waldman, 2010: 106, 132).

Hamer, funded by the U.S. National Institute of Health, published research on the genetics of spirituality in his book titled *The God Gene* (2004). Using a self-transcendence scale to measure spiritual traits the team subsequently isolated a gene that is related to self-transcendence (Hamer, 2004: 73). They also found that behaviours associated with religious practice tended to focus on outward compliance and social structure, while traits of self-transcendence are derived from internal cues and that religiousness and spirituality are fundamentally different (Hamer, 2004: 51-52). Mark (2006: 2015) further studied spiritual intelligence in relation to neuroplasticity in the brain through lateralization studies and proposes a symbiotic relationship between the spirit and the brain (Mark, 2006: 57; 2015: 14). Mark outlines a series of tools and techniques to improve SI and so rewire and balance lateralization functions of the hemispheres of the brain (2015: 371-275). As pointed out by several authors in reviews of Emmons’ work on SI, a distinction should

be made between spirituality and religion in determining the qualities and applications of spiritual intelligence, which will be discussed in the next section.

Religion and spirituality

There have been several studies on the relationship of spirituality to religion (Koenig, 2009; Nelson, 2009; Park, 2009; Hill, et al. 2001; King, Speck, & Thomas, 2001). Authors concur that there is a connection between religion and spirituality, but that there are also dissimilarities. Koenig, McCullough, and Larson (2000: 4-5) argue that spirituality is “the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions about life, meaning, and relationship to the sacred or transcendent which may (or may not) lead to, or arise from the development of religious rituals and participation in a religious community.” Pargament (2001: 72) counters that religions and spirituality are interconnected and inherently entwined. Characterizing religiousness and spirituality as incompatible opposites contradicts the experiences of many who integrate both constructs in their lives. Polarizing the terms as individual or organizational or in a good-bad dichotomy oversimplifies complex structures.

Park (2000: 6) describes spirituality as “personal search for meaning, transcendence, wholeness, purpose, and the realization of spirit as the animating essence at the core of life”. While Sinnott (2002: 95) defines spirituality as “one’s personal relation to the sacred or transcendent, a relation that then informs other relationships and the meaning of one’s own life, while religious practices may be the external sign of a spiritual orientation or simply a set of culturally cohesive practices, beliefs, and habits”. Wink, Dillon and Prettyman (2007: 321) define spirituality as “the self-existential search for ultimate meaning through an individualized understanding of the sacred.” Negi and Khanna (2011: 151-74) found that spirituality is an innate aspect of personality that may originate in a religion, but spirituality extends to all facets of a person’s life and is a chosen perspective, while religion is often a social or familial expectation. They propose that “True spirituality is something that is found deep within oneself and is reflected in the way of loving, accepting, and relating to the world and people around you, but is not necessarily found by believing in a prescribed way” (Negi & Khanna, 2011: 162).

Bhullar summarizes the literature stating that “religion is a framework for a system of beliefs, practices, and social values in the context of a community, while spirituality

involves the personal quest for understanding and finding answers to ultimate questions about life, meaning, and relationship to the sacred or transcendent” (Bhullar (2018: 123). A person can be spiritual without being religious; however, religion is the format in which people may pursue or practice spirituality.

There have also been studies on the relationship of religion and the spiritual qualities of SI. Leach, Berman, and Eubank (2008: 311-319) studied the assumption that religious practice may reduce aggression and other destructive behaviours. Their study included two aspects of religious orientation and states of spiritual transcendence in relationship to levels of aggression. The method included a self-report survey and compared the results to responses in a controlled laboratory setting. They found that neither memorization of Biblical passages nor meditation reduced aggression. Intrinsically religiously oriented participants reported lower aggression than extrinsically oriented participants, but no differences were found on the laboratory task of aggression. Spiritual transcendence also showed no difference in behavioural aggression traits. They suggest that self-report measures may produce different results than controlled laboratory settings. They also propose the need to further validate how religious orientation and aggressive behaviours are related in ordinary social interactions and in the complex form of aggression found in global religious conflicts (Leach, Berman, & Eubank 2008: 318).

Spirituality and spiritual intelligence

Definitions of spiritual intelligence distinguish the concept of spirituality from religiosity. Spirituality refers to the search for and experience of ultimate meaning and the sacred, while spiritual intelligence (SI) emphasizes the abilities to utilize these spiritual resources to predict functioning and adaptation (Emmons, 1999: 92). Rich and Cinamon (2007: 8) cite research demonstrating that spirituality that is based in cultural, religious, and social contexts is generally a positive force in human functioning. They examine the understanding of spirituality among Arab and Jewish Israeli late adolescents through semi-structured interviews and a consensual qualitative research method. Results indicate broad agreement among the groups that transcendence is the essential component of spirituality, and that religious and humanistic modes of spirituality exist concurrently in both groups. However, while the transcendent was important to both groups, the cultural application differed.

Amram and Dryer (2008: 2) also found that SI can be differentiated from spirituality and spiritual belief in that “SI is a construct that combines spiritual concepts with intelligence resulting in abilities that utilize spiritual resources, values, and qualities to enhance daily functioning and wellbeing” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 2). Individuals across faiths have these abilities to some degree, and several researchers (Emmons, 2000; Amram & Dryer, 2008; Mark, 2015) have found that practice or training may help develop some or all these abilities. Amram (2007) developed a multi-religious perspective of spiritual intelligence which proposes that there is not one unifying cosmology across spiritual traditions, but that most spiritual traditions develop a set of qualities that are adaptive and increase functioning and wellbeing. He gives the example that Christians may align with the sacred through Jesus, Muslims through Allah, and Jews may do so through the Torah, but the capacity to align with the sacred is universally adaptive which he equates with spiritual intelligence.

Amram (2008:3) conducted thematic analyses in relation to components of spiritual intelligence from nine different spiritual traditions (including Muslims, Christians, and Jews). Results showed that participants from all traditions regularly applied their SI abilities to solve problems by using skills such as intuition, transcending linear thinking through synthesis of paradoxes, or by taking a global systems perspective to solve problems more holistically (Amram, 2008: 24). Several major themes emerged which are universally valued and present across all the religious traditions: grace, meaning, transcendence, truth, peaceful surrender of self, inner directedness, living harmoniously, respect for nature, developing inner freedom, and responsibility for wise behaviour (Amram, 2008: 24-25).

Ronel (2008: 100) studied SI in a theistic context in which SI is perceived as an ability to understand the world and oneself through God-centeredness and to adapt one’s life accordingly. The author chose to define spirituality as “faith in God.” His study of SI in the context of religion determined that SI is an innate human ability that can be developed as with other intelligences but proposes that SI cannot be understood apart from a meaningful connection to and a belief in a transcendent God. Many of the qualities of SI are also promoted by and developed within the context of religion, such as faith, humility, gratitude, moral conduct, compassion, and forgiveness. He also finds this combination of the human abilities of SI, in connection with belief in God, are universal experiences in all

cultures (Ronel, 2008:113-114). In contrast, Joseph, and Sai Lakshmi (2011: 21) studied SI in the workplace finding that spirituality and SI have no relationship whatsoever to religion or belief systems, and that SI develops and is an effective predictor of satisfaction and performance independently of any system of religious belief. Van der Veer (2009: 1105-6) also promotes the scientific study of spirituality versus religion stating that “the emergence of spirituality as a concept enables the inclusion of a variety of traditions, without the conflicts of competing religious institutions and their authoritative boundary maintenance... it allows for a willingness to accept essential truths in all existing religions.”

In Skrzypinska's (2014: 277-78) study of spirituality in relation to religiousness, she concludes that defining spirituality as an intelligence is the most constrictive understanding of the concept. She suggests that spirituality can be considered in three aspects: 1) as a cognitive scheme (intelligence), 2) as an aspect of personality, 3) or as an attitude toward life. She proposes a model of spirituality that binds all these perspectives as the most effective in a psychological cognitive framework that better supports the search for meaning of life and for personal fulfilment. Her research suggests that the current popular interest in spirituality has risen at the same time as the number of people claiming to be spiritual, yet not religious, grows. Religion focuses on the ritual directed toward the transcendental and sacred, whereas spirituality refers to the inner experiential elements of meaning, eminence, and excellence (Skrzypińska, 2014: 278-279).

Clark, Lin, and Maher (2015: 229-244) studied the relationship between SI and altruism, ethnocentrism, and intercultural willingness to communicate, and how these relate to intention to help a culturally different stranger. They found that higher levels of SI traits such as altruism, were predictors of willingness to communicate with those of different cultures, and that lower levels of ethnocentrism were linked to lower tendencies to avoid interacting with and assisting a stranger. Higher levels of ethnocentrism were associated with greater likelihood of leaving a stranger of a different culture in need without acting to help. However, willingness to communicate with those of a different culture and intention to act to help were not related, meaning that SI indicators can lead to willingness to communicate, but not necessarily to actually helping a stranger.

Maslow (1970: vii) provides earlier insight stating that historically many organized religions developed in two extreme wings - one with a focus on the legalistic and organizational level of religion, and the other with a focus on the mystical and individual spiritual states. Religion can become extremely legalistic and bureaucratic, insisting on compliance, which often does not support the subjectively spiritual experience of transcendence. Those involved solely in the experience of transcendence may develop a singular focus on their inner experience and lose awareness of social morality, only seeking their own salvation, maybe at the expense of others. Maslow recommends a path that navigates these two extremes.

The profoundly and authentic religious person integrates these trends easily and automatically. The religious forms, rituals, ceremonies, and verbal formulae in which he was reared remain experientially rooted, symbolically meaningful, and intuitive, but he is never reduced to just the rote behavioural [aspects of worship] ...He can also seek the inner awakening of transcendence (Maslow 1970; vii-viii).

Perspectives on spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic religions

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have a shared history, many common values, and share a belief in an omnipresent, transcendent God (Ramadan, 2011: 4). In a collection of essays on promoting understanding among Muslims with Jews and Christians, Prince Hassan bin Talal writes that, "revelation is always the accommodation of the capacity of man.... The voice of God reaches the spirit of man in a variety of ways and in a multiplicity of languages. One truth comes to expression in many ways of understanding" (Magonet, ed., 2003: vii). He is referring to the shared positive spiritual and religious values that the Abrahamic faiths may build upon to increase their capacity for mutual understanding and cooperation to reduce conflict associated with religious differences. The following sections will provide an overview of views on SI in the three faiths, including commonalities and differences.

Jewish perspective on spiritual intelligence

While there is little literature specific to SI in Judaism, Pava's model of Jewish ethics and morality, which he terms intelligent spirituality, can be compared to the constructs of SI. These include an appreciation of nature, a sense of unity with creation, generativity and

concern for others, compassion, and transcendence (Pava, 2009: 41-65). He states that Judaism teaches that Torah is the collective wisdom of the tradition and provides the blueprint for human experience. The more spiritual wisdom that followers acquire allows them to develop a clearer and more authentic perspective of life with a blueprint to live accordingly. The phrase “acquiring Torah” is the process of internalizing this wisdom to bring about a genuine transformation to more wholistic and moral inner self (Pava, 2009: 9). He argues that Jewish values are not fixed or derived from sacred texts but are the product of the thought of contemporary Jews. He provides a model for the use of Jewish religious and spiritual values that emphasizes respect for individual autonomy, pluralism, democracy, and a deep regard for other moral traditions. He suggests that modern Jews can use these values to choose the highest and most ethical course to solve problems and to find productive solutions to larger world problems, such as interfaith discord (Pava, 2009: 10).

Hanson (2008: 3) studied the neuroscience of Jewish spiritual contemplative practices, identifying the frontal lobe as the locus to deepen and support the transcendent state. He found that Jewish contemplative methods promoted relaxation and reduced stress, anxiety, and tension, while promoting a sense of happiness. This state can then extend to other areas of life, with more conscious and compassionate choices and actions. Boteach (2010: xviii) also writes that society can be made whole again when individuals make the choice to live a life based on values, and that Jewish history and a shared religious legacy are important universal values. These values are based on the Bible and thousands of years of Jewish spiritual living that can be employed by Jews, but also shared with Christians, Muslims, or atheists to renew existence and recommit to the most precious things in life. In another qualitative phonological study of twenty-seven Israeli adults, the authors explored how individuals who experience spiritual change outside of religion construe the construct of spirituality. Qualities of authenticity and genuineness appeared to be linked to a personal, unmediated experience of higher states, rather than a cognitive understanding of God and reality often presented in formal religion (Russo-Netzer & Mayseless, 2017: 8).

Scheindlin (2008: 343-4) studied the concept of the “integrating individual” in the context of Jewish education. He uses the term as “one who possesses the skill and motivation to incorporate spiritual knowledge into a larger and unified life-picture”. He then defines

spiritual development as an integration of deep connections consisting of basic dispositions (strengthened from experiences of wonderment, awe, joy, inner peace), and complex dispositions (displayed through acts of caring, kindness, empathy, and reverence), which are reinforced by modelling and cultivating spiritual moments. He proposes that emotions help determine our daily perceptions, as well as influence moral choices and related spiritual experiences, and these are tied to thoughts and emotions. He states that the Jewish texts recognizes both the cognitive and emotional aspects of spiritual life and that *Yirat Shamayim*, or fear or awe of Heaven, is an important aspect of Torah learning. He finds that Jewish education and training can help develop these complex spiritual qualities through an awareness of simpler emotions and qualities, coupled with aspects of cognitive learning.

A similar approach called Mussar is described by Morinis (2014: 8) which utilizes the spectrum of Jewish wisdom, law, revelation into constructs that mirror the abilities of SI. Mussar practices are a means to internalize Jewish values for a more ethical, meaningful life and promote an inner experiential learning to live according to the spirit of Jewish spiritual teaching. He proposes that the central concern of Judaism is to accomplish a personal spiritual transformation and when this process of transformation is at the centre of life, then all circumstances are re-visioned as pathways for growth. Mussar is also the Hebrew word for “measure” and refers to the positive soul traits and practices to strengthen abilities that can lead to spiritual transformation. Morinis developed techniques aimed at developing and promoting Mussar in daily life, including cultivating humility, joy, awe, good-heartedness, closeness with others, not taking credit for oneself, judging others favourably, and other similar traits included in SI. Steps in developing Mussar include attentive listening, understanding the heart, serving the sages, cultivating moral purity, good heartedness, loving God and being beloved (Morinis, 2014: 21). He states that the results of using methods of developing each quality of Mussar are a refined soul, a strong and open heart, and a more moral, satisfying life.

Muslim perspective on spiritual intelligence

There have been several articles and books published on SI relative to the Muslim faith. Esmaili, Hamid, and Golverdi (2014: 171) write that SI in Islam refers to those who have realized the nature of Divine truth and passed through the challenges and illusions of life

to align with the nature of God. The authors recommend spiritual exercises and daily actions to promote SI. Safaria and Bhatia (2013: 412-419) studied SI in India and Iran with a focus on the validity of SI constructs across religions and cultures. They review the connection of SI to the religions in those countries and conclude that all traditions foster a trust in God that closely relates to a sense of inner strength, and the capacity to cultivate an awareness of the spiritual aspects of life. This is based on the multireligious belief that God individually is present in daily life and provides a source of strength and guidance that is a constant across religions and cultures. They further studied SI in Islam and Muslim cultures and observe that the characteristics outlined in the Qur'an fit with the constructs of SI (Safaria & Bhatia, 2013: 419).

In Hussain's book, *7 Steps to Spiritual Intelligence Based on Classical Islamic Teachings* (2014), the author interprets the Qur'an and Islamic teaching as promoting SI. He provides practical advice for young Muslims on the elements of SI and ways to translate SI competencies into Muslim religious practice. He states that Mohammed had high SI and outlines methods to emulate the prophet, including discipleship, prayer and genuinely seeking God, practising simplicity and contentment, self-introspection, and self-control. One of the aims is to also promote resilience and achieve happiness and satisfaction with life in general, with the assumption that most people are unhappy in modern cultures (Hussain, 2014: 12-16). "SI is the knowledge through which one attains Divine nearness, purification of the self, ridding of moral vices, and developing a strong character. It starts with knowledge, followed with constant moral action, and results in obtaining insight into the Qur'an and Islamic teaching to promote SI" (Hussain, 2014: 5). The author provides exercises, reflections on scripture, and meditations for Muslims to develop a regular SI practice.

Mahasneh et al. (2015) studied the relationship of SI and personality traits among undergraduate Jordanians students. The authors regard spiritual intelligence as the most significant type of intelligence for Muslims because SI abilities can influence change, individually, socially, and culturally. SI can also assist individuals to adopt a positive outlook and achieve inner peace. The authors used King's SISRI-24 to assess SI which they found to be a valid instrument in a predominantly Muslim culture. The SISRI-24 was administered to Hashemite university students and the results were then correlated to a personality trait questionnaire (Mahasneh, et al., 2015: 94-95). The results showed a

statistically significant relationship between spiritual intelligence dimensions (critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion) and personality traits (openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness). They found that personality traits such as emotional stability, agreeableness, and openness are most aligned with SI traits of kindness, being responsible, open-minded and creative, and transcendence, and that these attributes of personality and SI may be mutually reinforcing. They found that SI can be developed through methods such as training, coaching, and therapy, and that SI modifications improve student self-motivation, personal control, and help to reduce stress levels in a hectic modern life, and therefore may promote academic accomplishment and improve general life skills (Mahasneh, et. al., 2015: 89).

Hannefar and Sa'ari (2016: 2069-2074) studied SI themes in the context of Western (Judeo-Christian) and Islamic philosophic perspectives. Through thematic analysis they found seven common themes present in both traditions that can assist in developing SI. These included finding meaning and purpose for life, developing spiritual consciousness, a sense of transcendence, obtaining spiritual resources of self-determination, reflection/soul purification, and spiritual coping with obstacles. They propose that there is a need to develop valid and reliable SI constructs inclusive of social and cultural considerations of both cultures. The authors hope that the results of the study may contribute to the development of valid and reliable spiritual intelligence themes beyond the social and cultural boundaries from the two perspectives and assist to create a harmonious relationship between Western and Islamic culture. They also propose that these two views are compatible and integrative, rather than opposing each other (Baharuddin & Ismail, 215: 568).

Conversely, Albursan et al. (2016: 1281-1295) state that spiritual intelligence refers to understanding the meaning of life and death and the ultimate truth of existence. They studied the relationship between SI and religious orientation in Saudi Arabian students by developing their own scale to measure SI for the purposes of the study. They found that extrinsic socially oriented religiousness was the only orientation that was a significant predictor of SI, which reflects a perspective of SI that is unique to Saudi culture.

Christian perspective on spiritual intelligence

Spiritual intelligence is also discussed by several authors in the context of Christianity. Beardsley's (2004: 2-7) presentation on SI in the Bible states that, "assimilation of the domains of spiritual intelligence enables one to interpret spiritual principles and apply them to the challenges of life. One can then draw from this deep well of content mastery to solve a variety of life problems... Spiritual intelligence also enables ordinary people to transform challenging experiences and emotions for a higher purpose." She recommends facilitating a spiritual form of thought through meditation related to scripture, appreciation of nature, or striving to do "God's work." This is contrasted with other forms of meditation that aim to cultivate silence or achieve the absence of thought and inner stillness. She states that most of the references to meditation are in the psalms, and that Christian hymns and songs can also be a form of reflection and meditation that can cultivate SI. She provides several passages from the Bible that support each of these activities. For example, to support the appreciation of nature as a spiritual exercise, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge" (Romans 1:19-23). Her conclusion is that meditation, observation and appreciation of nature, reflection, and contemplative practices, particularly based on scripture will assist Christians to develop SI with improved cognition and functioning in many areas of life (Beardsley, 2004: 7).

Brewer (2008: 2-21), a Presbyterian pastor, also presents SI from a Christian perspective. He interprets the competencies of SI based on biblical passages with practical activities such as prayer and involvement in a church community as ways to enhance SI, and to "hear and respond to God" (Brewer, 2008: 7). He proposes that raising SI can change life for the positive and examines the relationship of SI to intellectual and emotional intelligence. Further chapters provide exercises in four areas to promote SI for increased ability to hear and respond to God. He also provides Biblical passages to support the exercises, such as Proverbs 2:10, "For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul." He writes that improving and understanding SI is essential for Christians to successfully deal with the complexity of modern times. SI also enables us to utilize cognitive and intellectual abilities more effectively and to deal with emotional confusion by going to the Source. He concludes that many cultural, political, and international conflicts are related to spirituality and religion, and that Christians need to

develop spiritual wisdom and increase their spiritual intelligence to ensure their own wellbeing, but also to foster global solutions (Brewer, 2008: 65).

Mark (2015) has written about SI from a Christian perspective and provides meditations and spiritual practices to develop SI aimed at balancing the hemispheres of the brain. He states that the process allows us to awaken and experience our inner spiritual nature and transform our lower natures through the spirit of Christ. Exercises include solitude and prayer, community work, and worship. The goal is to feel the presence of the Divine that guides our behaviour toward alleviating hatred and suffering in the world and promote devotional living. This includes nurturing relationships and resolving conflicts by accessing one's own feelings and re-aligning towards positive behaviour towards others. He recommends a routine practice for self-directed relaxing of body, mind, and spirit, and regularly connecting with the transcendent God (Mark, 2015: 172-8).

Roberts and Hess-Hernandez (2018) published their work with promoting SI in the workplace from a Christian perspective and provide exercises for integration and application of Christian principles in the daily decision-making process. This includes identifying and managing character strengths and weaknesses, overcoming negative emotions, servant leadership, and the ability to use wisdom at a higher-level of thinking. They recommend developing a systematic education and training programme to promote workplace SI for Christians with a combination of reflective learning processes, the completion of a self-diagnostic inventory, journalling, and group accountability support programs. They found that the effective integration of spiritual intelligence by those of faith in the workplace will result in several benefits, including higher levels of work effectiveness and elevated mental and physical health.

Lawton (2020: 15-22) also provides insights on SI from a Christian perspective, presenting the results of his study on the need for SI for those from a faith tradition. His findings point to the correlation of SI and morality, the relationship of morality and intelligence, and the implications for social justice. He also points to the limits of cognitive intelligence in achieving SI and therefore in achieving the moral life taught by Jesus, including justice across social and cultural sectors. He also discusses the challenges of acquiring SI in the increasing social and technological complexity. The author takes an interdisciplinary approach in promoting the need for spiritual intelligence and addresses

several issues of spirituality and its role in human development. He provides insights from disciplines related to SI such as neuroscience, medical science, psychology, and theology to develop his theories and training programs in SI for Christians.

Fambro (2022) writes that spiritual intelligence points to an unseen realm that affects the world around us, and that the Bible speaks clearly of an unseen world that is parallel to ours. Spiritual intelligence includes an awareness of the presence of God and this spiritual dimension of reality. She provides a quote from Corinthians to illustrate the validity to Christians. “This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words” (I Corinthians 2:13, NIV). This spiritual realm is encountered through faith and helps overcome worldly concerns into an expanded spiritual awareness of events. “Every situation we encounter has an unseen spiritual dimension, and we are always needing to choose between fear and faith. Spiritual intelligence offers a greater perspective than the natural world and enables us to make decisions and solve problems in every circumstance” (Fambro, 2022: 1). She states that SI, as with the other intelligences, can be developed with practice to promote “discernment of the Holy Spirit to guide and teach us” (John 16:13).

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter provided additional information on the themes introduced in the first section that are important to establishing the relationship between spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue in the Abrahamic religions. A framework of religious pluralism was presented that was the most promising for this project including the premise that religions are fundamentally different, so the intent of the dialogue is to understand the differences and develop a positive acceptance in spite of unique beliefs of each group. This form of pluralism seemed the most conducive to promoting the construct of SI and positive dialogue, while acknowledging the fundamental differences of each faith and maintaining positive religious identity. It is based on a pluralism that goes beyond mere tolerance and moves toward mutual understanding, which potentially can move interreligious groups to interdependence and cooperation toward a common goal of compassion and justice for each group (Huang, 1995: 132).

Further information was provided on spirituality in the context of religion, and spiritual intelligence was distinguished from the concepts of spirituality and religiosity. Spirituality

refers to the search for and experience of ultimate meaning and the sacred, while spiritual intelligence (SI) emphasizes the abilities to utilize these spiritual resources to predict functioning and adaptation (Emmons, 1999; 92). Bhullar summarizes the literature on the relationship of spirituality and religion, stating that “religion is a framework for a system of beliefs, practices, and social values in the context of a community, while spirituality involves the personal quest for understanding and finding answers to ultimate questions about life, meaning, and relationship to the sacred or transcendent” (Bhullar, 2018: 122). A person can be spiritual without being religious; however, religion is the format in which people may pursue or practise spirituality.

Interfaith dialogue (IFD) and spiritual intelligence (SI) were examined in the context of the three faiths. There are several common themes that emerge from the three faiths for both IFD and SI that provide a basis for promoting SI and enhancing IFD in a community setting and support the goal of promoting SI and facilitating IFD proposed in this research. There are many publications addressing IFD in the Abrahamic faiths as an emerging construct that can potentially address many interfaith problems and issues and is an increasingly popular response to religious conflict and religious nationalism (Kratz-Mays, 2008: 3). While there are a variety of approaches, the purpose of all interfaith dialogue projects is to enhance religious tolerance and promote peaceful coexistence. The importance of Abrahamic interfaith dialogue has been noted by several authors (Swidler, 1995; Magonet; 2003; Duran & Firestone, 2007). While not all groups or denominations within the Abrahamic faiths support IFD, the three congregations in this project are supportive of promoting interreligious understanding and working together in community service. Ramadan (2011: 4) writes that the Abrahamic traditions all come from the same source and regardless of the faith we follow, it is important to see past what divides us and discover the beauty of what we have in common. He writes that eventually all different spiritual paths lead to the human heart and religion provides an explanation of the ultimate meaning of life and ways to live accordingly.

The literature relative to SI from the three faiths, or intelligent spirituality in the case of Judaism, presents a common premise that the more spiritual wisdom that followers acquire allows them to develop a clearer and more authentic perspective on life with a blueprint to live accordingly. SI literature from the three faiths support internalizing this inner wisdom to promote a genuine transformation to more wholistic and moral inner self.

This can occur regardless of the tradition and sacred texts that this process is derived from. The Abrahamic traditions foster a trust in God that closely relates to a sense of inner strength, along with the capacity to cultivate an awareness of the spiritual aspects of life. This is based on the multireligious belief that God is present in daily life and provides a source of strength and guidance that is a constant across religions and cultures.

Based on an ecumenical theory of spiritual intelligence, Amram (2007: 24-25) proposes that there is not one unifying cosmology across spiritual traditions, but that most spiritual traditions develop a set of qualities that are adaptive and increase functioning and wellbeing. The capacity to align with the sacred is universally adaptive, which he equates with spiritual intelligence. As stated, Amram and Dryer (2008) developed and validated the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS), which was selected as the SI assessment tool for this research. The ISIS was developed and tested across nine different religions and belief traditions for an ecumenically grounded theory of SI. The ISIS contains twenty-two subscales assessing separate SI capabilities that are “grouped into five domains: consciousness, grace, meaning, transcendence, and truth” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 2). All these domains can be correlated to the qualities mentioned in the literature on SI from the three faiths, and so support the theory that an ecumenical approach to promote SI can be developed and presented to members of the three congregations recruited for this project.

Nobel (2000: 14-21) notes that the abilities of SI include the conscious recognition that physical reality is embedded within a larger, multidimensional reality with which we interact both consciously and unconsciously. The conscious pursuit of spiritual and psychological health, not only for ourselves but for the sake of the global community can be cultivated for positive outcomes. Striving toward an understanding of the ultimate meanings of life and growing to our full human potential are aspects of SI (Wigglesworth, 2012: 14), and these same attributes are also constructive aspects of the Abrahamic faiths while engaged in positive interfaith dialogue (May, 2003: 3). The literature on both IFD and SI in the Abrahamic faiths therefore supports the goals of this research and served as a basis for developing modules to promote SI in the Abrahamic faiths and for then conducting IFD among the three participating congregations.

Chapter Three will present the sources on promoting spiritual intelligence (SI) in the Abrahamic Faiths that were compared for common elements, and then integrated into lessons based on the five domains of the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale. The concepts presented in Chapter Two on the unique perspectives of SI and IFD in the three faiths served as the framework to promote and assess SI that was outlined in the proposed research model. The thesis of this research is that developing the qualities of spiritual intelligence (SI) in a theistic context may also promote interfaith understanding and more effective interfaith dialogue. This may also foster an awareness of the positive aspects of the three faiths and of the sacred that is held in common, while acknowledging the unique heritage of the Abrahamic traditions.

CHAPTER 3

TRAINING IN SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the framework for promoting spiritual intelligence (SI) in the Abrahamic faiths and compare common elements (3.1). These elements are integrated into lessons based on the five domains of the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (3.2), then additional recommendations are provided to further develop SI (3.3), followed by a summary of the findings of this chapter (3.4). This serves as the basis to develop an introductory model and five training modules to promote SI for participants from the three congregations. The short form Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) developed by Amram and Dryer (2008) was selected to assess the spiritual intelligence of participants of this research. They found that religions across traditions cultivate universal sets of qualities that are adaptive and may increase functioning and wellbeing (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 34). I have also taken the long-form ISIS and worked with certified counsellors on Dr Amram's staff to improve my personal SI based on the results of the ISIS. I also became a Certified Spiritual Intelligence Coach with Dr Amram's organization, Intelligensi, prior to the start of this project.

The overall thesis of this research is that developing the qualities of spiritual intelligence (SI) in a theistic context may also promote interfaith understanding and more effective interfaith dialogue. The capacity to align with the sacred is universally adaptive and can be assessed (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 24). Spiritual intelligence can be applied to solve specific problems by tapping abilities such as using intuition, transcending rationality through synthesis of paradoxes, or in taking a holistic systems perspective to solve problems more globally. In addition to helping solve specific problems, spiritual intelligence can be applied in daily life to experience greater meaning and wellbeing by exercising SI abilities such as mindfulness, presence, and equanimity, even in difficult circumstances. (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 34).

3.2 Framework for promoting spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic faiths.

Nobel (2000: 14-21) notes that the abilities of SI include the conscious recognition that physical reality is embedded within a larger, multidimensional reality with which we interact, consciously and unconsciously. Further, the conscious pursuit of spiritual and psychological health, not only for ourselves but for the sake of the global community, can be cultivated for positive outcomes. Striving toward an understanding of the ultimate meaning of life and growing to our full human potential are also aspects of SI (Wigglesworth, 2012: 14).

Literature on SI from the three faiths support internalizing this inner wisdom to shift to a more holistic and moral inner self. This can occur regardless of the tradition and sacred texts that this process is derived from. The Abrahamic traditions foster a trust in God that provides inner strength, along with the capacity to cultivate an awareness of the spiritual aspects of life. Amram (2007: 24-25) proposes that there is not one unifying cosmology across spiritual traditions, but that most spiritual traditions develop a set of qualities that are adaptive and increase functioning and wellbeing. Amram and Dryer's results showed that participants from all traditions regularly applied the abilities of SI to solve problems by using skills such as intuition, transcending linear thinking through synthesis of paradoxes, or by taking a global systems perspective to solve problems more holistically (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 24).

The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale domains

The training modules for this research are based on the five domains from the ISIS. Selected literature on methods to promote SI from the perspective of the three Abrahamic religions were compared to capacities of the ISIS and integrated into the five lessons. First, there is an introductory module to introduce the project and the expectations to the nine participants. The six modules include:

- 1) Introductory Module-** Includes an overview of the constructs of SI and IFD, and descriptions of the expectations for participation in the research project. This was used to inform prospective participants of the details of the project and set the context for taking the ISIS, for participating in the five SI training modules, and the two facilitated interfaith dialogues.

- 2) **Module 1 Consciousness:** Development of refined awareness and self-knowledge, featuring intuitive trans-rational knowing, mindfulness, and spiritual practices, including subscale capacities for intuition, mindfulness, and synthesis.
- 3) **Module 2 Grace:** Living in alignment with the sacred, manifesting trust in and love for life that is based on gratitude, beauty, and joy, including subscale capacities of beauty, discernment, freedom, gratitude, immanence, and joy.
- 4) **Module 3 Meaning:** Experiencing significance in daily activities through a sense of purpose and a call for service, even in the face of pain and suffering, including subscale capacities for purpose and service.
- 5) **Module 4 Transcendence:** Going beyond the separate egotistic self into an interconnected wholeness, including a holistic systems worldview and the nurturing of human relationships through empathy, compassion, loving-kindness, and I-Thou orientation, including subscale capacities for higher-self, holism, practice, relatedness, and sacredness.
- 6) **Module 5 Truth:** Living in open acceptance, forgiveness, curiosity, and love for all that is (all creation), including respect for the wisdom of multiple spiritual traditions, with subscale capabilities for egoless-ness, equanimity, inner wholeness, openness, presence, and trust (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 4).

Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report

The following narratives in each of the sections are taken from the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report (ISIR) that was sent to me after my individual survey had been taken and scored (Amram, 2020). “Spiritual intelligence is the ability to apply, manifest, and embody spiritual resources, values, and qualities to enhance daily functioning and wellbeing” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 2). The intended purpose of the spiritual intelligence (SI) profile results is to gain insights into self-perception of strengths and opportunities and suggest practices that will help to develop SI. The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report (ISIR) is a self-reporting measure that can be useful as a self-assessment tool and has been academically shown to be a reliable and valid instrument (Amram & Dryer,

2008). However, it is important to note the limitations of self-reporting instruments. Selecting the answers to the ISIS may be influenced by self-perceptions that can be more positive or hopeful or they can be more self-critical, depending on the orientation of the respondent. The ISIS-360 instrument is available as a next step to solicit feedback from friends and colleagues and provides a profile of strengths, assets and opportunities for development as seen by others, which can then be compared to self-perception.

As the ISIR is a self-assessment report, the focus is less on the absolute score, which might be less reliable, and instead focuses more on relative strengths and opportunities for improvement. In other words, receiving a higher score in some dimensions might either be a justified and accurate self-perception, or a tendency to think more highly of oneself than might be objectively true, or some combination of both. Conversely, having a relatively low score in some dimensions may reflect a lower actual ability in that dimension, or just a more modest self-assessment. It is therefore more useful to focus on understanding relative strengths and assets, how to better apply them, and on opportunities for further growth rather than comparison to others or trying to find an absolute score.

The ISIR score breakdown is provided in a chart labelled, 1) Strengths (with the areas that tend to score the highest and can be leveraged the most, coloured in green), 2) Assets (other capacities and areas that can be leverage, coloured in blue), and 3) Opportunities (the areas with the greatest potential for development and growth, coloured in yellow). Under this overall Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Score, scores are also provided for the five main domains and the twenty-two sub-scale capability measures. For each domain there are also suggestions and tips for further developing and applying these competencies. When reviewing the self-assessment results, it is best to look at the opportunities and note that these are all relative to individual capacities. It is recommended to minimize a deficit mentality and avoid comparison with others or self-criticism. It is best to approach this process with self-compassion, curiosity, and to leverage strengths when working on opportunities (Amram, 2020: 2-5).

All of the domains of the ISIS can be correlated with the qualities mentioned in the literature on SI from the three faiths, and so support the theory that an ecumenical approach to promote SI can be developed and presented to members of the three

congregations who were recruited for this project. As stated in the previous chapters, select literature relative to SI from the three faiths, or intelligent spirituality in the case of Judaism, present a common premise that the more spiritual wisdom that followers acquire will then allow them to develop a clearer and more authentic perspective of life with a blueprint to live accordingly.

References on spiritual intelligence from the Abrahamic religions

As discussed in Chapter One, literature has shown that SI can be developed through training methods and there are numerous references and texts for developing and promoting SI in a theistic context. These include multi-religious settings (Buzan, 2001; Wolman, 2001; Wiggelsworth, 2012), and in the Jewish faith (Morinis, 2014; Jaffe, 2016; Marcus, 2016), in Christianity (Brewer, 2008; Draper, 2009; Mark, 2015), and for Muslims (Hussain, 2014; Esmaili, Hamid, & Golverdi, 2014; Hanefa, Sa'ari, & Siraj, 2016). A theistic context assumes that the participants will have some faith in a transcendent God, and this was a planning assumption that was used in developing the SI training modules.

Four principal references on SI were chosen from each tradition to develop a synthesis of SI exercises that are correlated to the five domains of the ISIS. The criteria used to select the references included the presentation of a framework with constructs or themes of SI, along with practices or exercises to develop the qualities of SI. While each book is specific to their tradition, they also have concepts that may be relevant to those of other traditions. Some references specific to SI in Islam (Hussain, 2014) and Christianity (Brewer, 2008) were not selected because the exercises included religious practices that were specific to that tradition and would therefore not be relevant to the other faiths. The four references that were selected include the following.

Judaism reference

The book that was chosen for this project is, *The Spiritual Practice of Good Actions* by Greg Marcus (2016). Marcus presents concepts and practices to bring daily life into alignment with positive values through Mussar, or intelligent spirituality. Mussar is a thousand-year-old Jewish practice of spiritual growth based on mindful living and is a means to internalize Jewish values for a more ethical, meaningful, and authentic life. Marcus provides descriptions of soul traits and experiential learning practices with a focus

on conducting ourselves according to the spirit of the teaching. Mussar is also the Hebrew word for measure and he states that the question is not if we have a particular soul trait, but how much of the trait can we cultivate. The book presents soul traits with simple daily actions to develop each one. Drawing on Jewish and universal principles Marcus provides grounded instruction to help explore soul traits through daily techniques and exercises, including mantras, mindful observation, and journalling. He provides an evaluation tool and exercises in the soul traits of humility, patience, trust, loving kindness, honour, gratitude, equanimity, and calmness. Marcus (2016: 9-10) recommends making small gradual changes in everyday life to make lasting changes in our inner world and to bring actions and intentions into alignment with Jewish values. The intent is to bring real world situations into opportunities for spiritual growth, which in turn can make the world a better place. Greg Marcus has a Ph.D. in Biology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is the founder of *American Mussar*, and he is a well-known teacher and facilitator.

Islamic reference

Two sources were selected to represent development of SI in the Islamic tradition. The rationale is that the first source (Hanefa, Sa'ari, & Siraj, 2016) provides the Islamic concepts that correlate with the domains of SI, but only provides general practices for Muslims to promote SI. The second text (Helwa, 2020) provides similar Muslim concepts as the first source, but also provides exercises to develop Muslim spirituality that are similar to the Jewish and Christian sources on SI.

The first source on Islamic SI is *A Synthesis of SI Themes in Islamic and Western perspectives* by Hanefa, Sa'ari, and Siraj (2016). The authors provide passages from the Qur'an and examples from the life of Mohamad to illustrate SI for Muslims. They state that we are a spark of God that gives us our human potential. The goal of Muslims is to "reach the ultimate inner peace, calmness, and equanimity by removing all evil attributes, to connect with the heart, and then absorb an inner knowledge of God and the spiritual world" (Hanefa, Sa'ari, & Siraj, 2016: 2069). They provide information and general practices to promote SI in Islam for an awareness of higher consciousness and living purposefully, which will then promote a clear and refined relationship to God through the knowledge of our heart and soul. They state that developing the intellectual power to

understand the secrets of different sacred teaching, especially the Qur'an, involves diligent study "to understand the meaning and purpose of life, and to attain knowledge of God's will, wisdom, and compassion" (Hanefa, Sa'ari, & Siraj, 2016: 2069). When Muslims follow this path, they will act in accordance with their responsibility to God and perform good actions and avoid bad ones. SI is attained by orienting our inner awareness and experience to the Divine realm and to become aware of this interconnectedness with man's attributes and potential. The authors are on the faculty at the University of Malaya, including the Institute of Graduate Studies and the Academy of Islamic Studies.

The second source for promoting Muslim spirituality is *Secrets of Divine Love* by A. Helwa (2020). The author draws upon the Qur'an, ancient Islamic poetry, and stories from prophets and spiritual masters to help deepen the connection with God and an inner experience of trust and love. Through the use of scientific evidence, practical exercises, and guided meditations, readers are guided to develop the tools and awareness needed to discern and overcome negative inner conditions and traits and return to the source of divine peace and surrender (spiritual intelligence). Helwa is an experienced speaker and writer on Islam and spiritual development. She believes that everyone is "deeply loved by the Divine. She obtained her master's degree in divinity with the intention of helping others overcome personal and spiritual struggles and develop their inner alignment with Divinity" (Helwa, 2020: 347).

Christianity reference

The book that was chosen for this project is *Spiritual Intelligence: A New Way of Being* by Brian Draper (2009). Draper provides a framework and exercises to guide ordinary people on a daily basis to live with increasing integrity, wholeness, and well-being to become more spiritually intelligent. Draper provides passages from the Old and New Testaments and examples from Jesus' ministry to illustrate the concepts of SI and the rationale for the exercises. The book is organized into four progressive levels including, 1) We are where we are, 2) The false self, 3) The true self, and 4) Living in the 'flow'. In each of the four levels he provides a successive framework for activities and exercises including, 1) awakening, 2) seeing your world afresh, 3) living the change, and 4) passing it on. He provides these four steps in each level to promote SI for a total of 16 sections.

Draper collaborates with leaders and organizations to develop their spiritual intelligence and is an associate faculty member at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

3.3 Training modules to promote spiritual intelligence.

The constructs or themes from these authors do not exactly correlate to the five domains of the ISIS, so an assessment or thematic analysis was used to select the portions of the information on SI traits and the exercises that most closely relate to goals and recommendation of the five domains of the ISIS. The domains of the ISIS are not discreet constructs but flow into one another and exercises often overlap or reinforce qualities of the other domains. Each lesson of this project was designed to be about 90 minutes long, so not every subscale quality was addressed for each of the domains. Main themes or select subscale qualities that best match the descriptions provided in the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report were matched to the content covered by the selected authors from the three faiths. Participants had a copy of their own ISIR to refer to for a comprehensive list of subscale capabilities in each domain, and each lesson was provided to them the week prior to each class.

The five training modules are presented in the following general format.

- 1) Introductions and greetings.
- 2) Review the purpose of the class and ask if there were questions or observations from the previous session.
- 3) Present the information on the domain for that week from the ISIR.
- 4) Review the paragraphs from the authors on the perspective of each faith tradition about the domain and the exercises.
- 5) Discuss similarities or differences between the faiths.
- 6) Facilitate an integrated meditation on the domain.
- 7) Discuss recommended homework for the following week.

Introductory module

The following outline was developed into a Power Point presentation and was used for an introductory session to describe what participants could expect and the details of the

steps involved in the research project. This is followed by information on SI and IFD in the context of the Abrahamic faiths and a brief SI exercise to close the session.

A. Overview

This session presented an overview of doctoral research on the correlation of spiritual intelligence (SI) and participation in community interfaith dialogue (IFD). The discussion included an overview of research on spiritual intelligence and some practical uses of SI in relating to those of different cultures or faiths. Next were views on the religious context of spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic faiths, and then a discussion of IFD and potential to use our SI for a healthier engagement with those of other faiths.

B. Introduction

- 1) All attendees and presenters were asked to give their first name and faith tradition.
- 2) The facilitator gave a brief description of the research project and the steps for those who chose to participate.
 - a. Take the ISIS and provide confidentially coded results to researcher.
 - b. Participate in an initial facilitated IFD.
 - c. Participate in five training modules designed to promote SI that correlate to the five domains of the ISIS and to the literature on promoting SI from the three faiths.
 - d. Take the ISIS again and compare scores for the first ISIS.
 - e. Participate in a final IFD and complete a subjective survey.

C. Presentation of ethical considerations and protection of confidentiality.

D. Presentation of twenty-minute Power Point with the following information.

- Overview of research on spiritual intelligence.

- 1) What is SI?
 - 2) How does SI relate to IQ and EQ?
 - 3) What parts of the brain mediate SI?
 - 4) How is SI measured?
 - 5) How can SI be developed or improved?
- Spiritual Intelligence in the Abrahamic faiths.
 - 1) Religion and SI.
 - 2) Differences between religion and spirituality.
 - 3) Views on the context of spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic faiths.
 - a. Christianity
 - b. Judaism
 - c. Islam
 - What is interfaith dialogue?
 - 1) Brief history of IFD.
 - 2) The intersection of IFD in the three faiths.
 - 3) Opportunities in our SI and faith-based values to promote better understanding and cooperation among the Abrahamic faiths.
- E. Discussion and questions.
- F. Exercise/meditation to become aware of SI was facilitated during the online session.
- Close your eyes and go inside, take three deep breaths, and let them out slowly.
 - Become aware of your physical body, feel your body sitting in the chair, and your feet on the floor. Scan your body for awareness of anywhere you are holding tension or worry; worry for children or family; worry for health; worry about money; fear of the future; worry or fear for anything else. With your out-breath, release any energy from your physical body where you hold worry or fear and with the in-breath relax the areas you feel tension.

- As the worry and fear release allow your mind to become still and quiet, silently enjoy the beautiful day, let your thoughts rest in the nature around you, and just let your mind be still.
- Next, be aware of how you experience God; how do you sense your inner connection to divine spirit; then let that love of God flow into your heart center.
- Now picture this love flowing into you, filling you completely, letting yourself receive this divine love, as if you are becoming one with the heart and mind of Divinity.
- Let this love flow into anywhere in your body that needs healing, as if it is a shower of sunshine.
- Now become aware of your heart centre and feel self-love radiating into your whole being. Then let the combination of self-love and Divine love flow into your whole being.
- Then focus on someone you love a great deal, and let yourself feel that love, and then send the combined personal and divine love to that special person.
- Next send this love from your heart center to others in this session.
- Now picture the earth before you and send this love to everyone on Earth and see your love combined with God's love healing them.
- When you are ready take another breath, come back to your body, slowly come into the present, open your eyes, and stretch.

G. Discussion question of how easy it was to love others; to love yourself; and then to receive God's love? Please share any insights that you feel comfortable sharing.

H. Next steps.

Module One: Consciousness

This domain involves "the development of refined awareness and self-knowledge, featuring mindfulness, intuition, and transrational knowing. It reflects the ability to raise or shift consciousness, tap into intuition, and synthesize multiple points of view in ways that

enhance daily functioning and wellbeing” (Amram, 2020: 2). Consciousness is divided into three subscales of intuition, mindfulness, and synthesis.

Intuition refers to the ability to tap into your instinctive feelings, and modes of knowing beyond conscious and linear thinking to make decisions. Exercises to develop intuition include spending more time quieting the mind through contemplative practices such as meditation, or quiet time and solitude in nature. In interactions with others, listen deeply to both what is being said and what is not being said, and how your body’s soma-psyche is responding. Paying attention to resonance, or ease and openness in the body’s response to various thoughts or conjectures can be helpful, as often intuitive wisdom is available through the body and gut feelings. Paying attention to your dreams can also be helpful to gain access to non-linear and transrational modes of knowing.

Mindfulness refers to the capacity to be self-aware of your thoughts and feelings, as well as continually expanding your consciousness to include the shadow and hidden aspects of your psyche, and to empathize with others. You can develop a greater level of mindfulness through an ongoing meditation practice. Pausing periodically during each activity or conversation and asking ourselves, ‘What am I experiencing?’ or ‘What is the other person feeling/-wanting/needing?’ supports developing greater self-awareness and empathy for others. Being open to and asking for feedback from others can help uncover blind spots and expand self-knowledge.

Synthesis refers to the ability to synthesize conflicting, contradictory, or paradoxical viewpoints into an integrated perspective. Develop greater capacity for synthesis by replacing ‘either/or’ thinking with a ‘both/and’ thinking. A simple example would be the paradox of valuing your or others’ freedom and autonomy, or valuing connection and intimacy. A synthesis would entail valuing and integrating both autonomy and connection to others. In the midst of conflict with others, look for and find connection, common ground, and ways in which both points of view might be valid (Amram, 2020: 6).

Jewish perspective on consciousness

Consciousness in Mussar is about becoming aware of the holy and elevating ourselves in the eyes of God in what Marcus (2016: 17-19) terms “soul work.” Developing these spiritual muscles of awareness and presence takes practice and persistence. Exercises

are provided on soul traits to develop consciousness including patience, loving kindness, silence, equanimity. He also recommends meditation, mindful action, and journaling throughout the process. Marcus (2016: 38) provides the following exercise to begin to develop a practice of meditation for increased conscious awareness. To frame your thinking for the day, meditate on the soul trait that you are trying to develop.

Exercise:

- Quiet the mind and become still inside, notice your breath, and be present in the moment.
- The use of a phrase or mantra may help to quiet the mind and allow for better inner focus.
- Be mindful of your actions throughout the day to notice how the soul trait is affecting (or not) your thoughts and actions, then write in your journal at night to capture the spiritual challenges throughout the day.
- Look for one or two actions you can take to modify your thoughts and actions to promote more of the selected soul trait, such as practising silence or loving kindness (Marcus, 2016: 38).

Muslim perspective on consciousness

Individuals with high spiritual intelligence should have a greater level of consciousness in which to know their real self and live consciously with a clear mind and refined awareness. Knowledge of the soul includes qualities such as “qalb” or spirit, “ruh” or vibration in the heart, “nafs” or lower self and passions, and “aql” or intellect. These aspects comprise the root to the knowledge of God in Islam. People with high spiritual intelligence will have a high level of consciousness about their own creation and possess an ability to understand and gain knowledge about the soul, to acquire the knowledge of God and His attributes. This knowledge will lead to a meaningful worship, not merely a matter of body movement (i.e., prayers), but will also allow the integration of individuals’ external self with their inner self. The higher a person is in the realm of the nafs and aql, the higher the level of spiritual intelligence, with higher God consciousness coupled with self-consciousness. A person with high consciousness will be able to make good decisions or

choices that will bring a positive impact to their life, and they will have the option to consciously choose their behaviours and actions (Hanefa, Sa'ari, & Siraj, 2016: 10).

Helwa writes that “it is through creation that the universe comes to know itself, as it is our awareness (consciousness) that gives meaning to life. Our journey on Earth is not about achieving or doing, but about unwrapping the gift of divine love that we were given by God and becoming aware of the shoreless ocean of Allah’s love” (Helwa, 2020: 49). She also recommends daily practice such as mediation and prayer, breath work, and journalling to capture the spiritual journey and to note the progress made over the course of the exercises. She states that “when we connect with our breath, we are mysteriously connecting with the divine spirit that God blew into us” (Helwa, 2020: 51). She recommends the following practice.

Exercise

- Notice your breath. Allow yourself to breathe naturally.
- Witness that you are not breathing but being breathed.
- Observe your breath as if you are watching the ocean and the coming and going of the waves on the ocean floor. Inhale-hold/exhale-release, through several conscious breaths.
- As you inhale through your nose, allow your tongue to rise to the roof of your mouth and allow your breath to say “Al”.
- As you exhale through your mouth let your tongue drop down and allow the outward breath to say “lah” Do this in silent reflection for 3-5 minutes.
- Notice how you feel before and after the practice” (Helwa, 2020: 25).

Christian perspective on consciousness

Draper (2016: 11) states that every human soul has a certain latent capacity for God, and that this can be consciously realized with astonishing richness, which he equates with SI. SI is in all of us, but we rarely take time to become aware of it and access the precious qualities that are inherent in our inner being, or to become conscious of this aspect of ourselves. He also states that the goal of our lives is not to do more or acquire more, but

to reach for inner meaning through conscious and deliberate connection to Divinity. This will then have an impact on our daily lives and be a benefit to others. He also recommends meditation and journaling as a way to capture the progress and insights that are gained while on the journey of awakening. In the first chapter Draper describes the process of awakening and gives this initial exercise for first waking up in the morning. He recommends sitting up in a chair.

Exercise

- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply and take a few minutes to notice your breathing. Then spend a few minutes appreciating the gift of life and a new day.
- Become aware of the stillness around you and notice any sounds. Become aware that everything you do today will come out of that stillness and flow back into it again.
- Look at your hands and remember that you are shaping your day from the start. Resolve to be a blessing to everyone you touch physically, emotionally, and spiritually today, and that the work of your hands will be honest, caring, and good.
- Now look at yourself in the mirror, despite whether you like what you see or not, spend a few minutes remembering that you are very much a part of the day's picture, not just a passive onlooker watching the rest of life unfold before you, but playing a part as a character of great beauty and great potential.
- Contemplate your intention for the day and how you wish to show up (Draper, 2009: 18).

Integrated lesson on consciousness

- 1) The assumption is that everyone will have taken the introductory class on SI and IFD, participated in the introductory IFD, and taken the ISIS.
- 2) Begin the class with introductions and a brief description of your faith tradition and congregation.
- 3) Review the purpose of the class and ask if there are any questions or observations about the ISIR (SI report) or introductory session.

- 4) Briefly present the format of the ISIR and information on the five domains and subscales.
- 5) Present the information on consciousness from the ISIR.
- 6) Review the paragraphs from the authors on the perspective of each faith tradition about consciousness and the exercises.
- 7) Discuss similarities or differences between the faiths.
- 8) Meditation on consciousness facilitated during the online session.
 - Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and focus on the centre of your head. Notice the thoughts that are coming, going, and become aware of how your day or week, or to do list, are the focus of your attention. Then imagine a clear blue cloudless sky in the centre of your head and let the thoughts and concerns drift away so you can sit in stillness. Notice how you feel when your mind is quiet or slows down.
 - Now take a deep breath in and let it out slowly. Breathe naturally for a few minutes observing yourself breathing, and then become aware that you are being breathed. The life force that flows in and out of you is the gift of life, without you doing anything but receiving it. Become aware that everyone in the class is also breathing the gift of life and that we are sharing that breath.
 - Appreciate that when you have inner stillness and gratitude for the gift of life, that you may be more aware and perceptive. Think of one of the issues you let go of and notice whether it looks different or if you have a new insight from this space of inner quiet and stillness. This is your intuition coming into play and can be cultivated with more practice.
 - Now notice that you can observe yourself and others from this space with some detachment and realize that it is mindfulness.
 - Lastly, think of the issue again, take a deep cleansing breath letting it out slowly and note if you can see it from different perspectives and that of synthesis, looking at it from different perspectives.

- Take a moment to release the exercise into the clouds and come back into the clear blue sky in your mind. Take another deep slow deliberate breath and give gratitude to yourself for taking this time to meditate, and that you are developing your spiritual intelligence.
- Slowly come back into an awareness of your physical body and the surroundings in your room. Then open your eyes and take a few minutes to integrate the exercise.

9) Share anything you would like to from the meditation.

Recommended homework.

- 1) Suggest that you meditate every morning, or a convenient time during the day, for a few minutes using deep slow breaths, appreciating the gift of life, and set your intention for the day. It will also be helpful to keep a journal of your experiences and observations. Note if it is getting easier to slow down, how well you met your intentions for the day, and any insights you gained from being mindful and purposeful during the day.
- 2) You may also choose one of the exercises or practices presented in this lesson, then write in your journal about the experience.

Module Two: Grace

This domain involves the capacity to live in alignment with the sacred, manifesting trust in and love for life that is based on gratitude, beauty, and joy. It involves being inner-directed with the capacity for “discernment and inner freedom, experiencing love for life and drawing on the inspiration, beauty, and joy inherent in each moment to enhance functioning and wellbeing” (Amram, 2020: 3). The domain of grace has six subscale capacities including beauty, discernment, freedom, gratitude, immanence, and joy.

Beauty refers to the capacity to notice, appreciate and enjoy the beauty that is within and around us. Spending time in nature can often help us appreciate the beauty and mystery of our existence and life. Looking at art, watching the night sky, a sunset, the ocean, the forest, or the view of a mountain vista can help develop our sense of beauty and awe. We

can further experience beauty and awe in watching a newborn baby and contemplating the mystery of life.

Discernment refers to the ability to judge, perceive, have insight, and live in alignment and integrity with one's truth and values. Paying attention to the small, still voice inside that tells us when our inner truth is helping us to develop discernment, as does asking ourselves if our actions are truly aligned with our values and higher selves.

Freedom refers to the capacity to live autonomously and authentically, to think creatively rather than simply following popular convention in our beliefs, actions, and speech. We can cultivate our inner freedom by surrendering and becoming committed to the truth or developing the courage to take an unpopular and unconventional stand when needed.

Gratitude is the heart's capacity for thankful appreciation for all that we are given. Counting your blessings, reflecting on, and keeping a journal of the positive things that happen during the day can help cultivate gratitude. Before going to sleep or upon waking up spending a few moments reflecting on all that you have received and enjoyed during the day may help you feel more grateful. Gratitude has been shown to be associated with improved mood and health.

Immanence refers to the capacity for embodiment and experiencing the beauty and mystery of creation, nature, and life in the midst of our daily doing and being. Scanning the body and paying attention to the five senses during daily tasks helps develop embodiment. Immanence can also be cultivated by slowing down, paying attention, and enjoying small things like taking a shower, eating, or brushing your teeth. Spending time in and close to nature has also been shown to support embodiment and immanence. Embodiment practices such as yoga, Tai Chi, or Qi Gong, which work with life force energy can also support our capacity for immanence.

Joy refers to the capacity to enjoy and feel satisfaction and contentment in life. Looking for and finding opportunities for light-hearted play and humour and recovering the purity and innocence of the inner child can increase your capacity for joy. What is fun in your life? What do you enjoy doing and how can you restore innocent, childlike play into your life? Do you like to dance, sing, do art, or play a musical instrument? Cultivating curiosity can also bring forth your innate joy of discovery and learning (Amram, 2020: 7-8).

Jewish perspective on grace

The soul traits most closely aligned with the domain of grace are gratitude and awe of majesty. Marcus (2016: 138) states that the soul trait of gratitude governs the ability to recognize the good in any situation and see life as a gift. To Marcus (2016: 138) the Hebrew word for soul, 'nephesh', implies recognition of the good in all of life, and Mussar practices teach one how to gain this appreciation in daily life. It is also possible to find gratitude even in apparent negative events. Lack of gratitude arises from being too absorbed in the outer world and taking the good for granted, or by becoming preoccupied with the bad.

Exercise:

- As you go through your day be mindful of tendencies to be too absorbed in outer activities or on negative events and record your observations in your journal.
- Pick one area of your life where you would like to experience more gratitude and choose small steps each day to help with this goal.
- You can also think of the worst things that have happened to you and contemplate the good that has come out of them.
- Write in your journal at the end of each day on your observations and progress (Draper, 2016: 48).

The Mussar soul trait of “awe of majesty” is the ability to infuse everyday living with a sense of wonder and mystery (Marcus, 2016: 198). Whether you believe in the divine or the universal, everyone has the opportunity to experience the overwhelming feeling of something greater and amazing beyond ordinary perception. Mussar practices cultivate this sense of wonder and being in the presence of the divine everywhere we go.

Exercise:

- Mussar teaches practical spirituality, so note how you feel about the concept of awe of the divine or universal. Does it seem too “out there” or impractical?
- Observe nature, art, music, or accomplished people, and note your ability to experience awe in them.

- Do you recognize the continuum with the divine in a beautiful sunset or the painting of a master?
- Meditate on the saying, “To pray is to take notice of the wonder and to regain a sense of mystery.” Take the time to stop and pray during the day and note whether it improves your sense of the mystery of life and awe for the creative intelligence that has made it.
- Write about your observations in your journal (Marcus, 2016: 212).

Muslim perspective on grace

The Arabic word “shukr” means gratitude, appreciating or thanking others, and Allah is Al-Shakur or the most appreciative who expresses his thankfulness through the precious gift of life, and his bounteous reward for cultivating good in the world. Those with high spiritual intelligence are eager to cultivate gratitude and so become closer to God with the ability to contemplate the reason for being in this world, and to understand the connection of their soul to the Almighty. Accepting oneself as a servant of God and worshipping him is a sign of appreciation for all life (Hanefa, Sa’ari, & Siraj, 2016: 9).

Helwa writes that “true gratitude or shukr is not based on circumstances but is based on the state of your spirit. Our gratitude does not make God more generous, but our gratitude makes us more receptive to receiving all that God continuously gives us” (Helwa, 2020: 41). She recommends keeping a gratitude journal. What you focus on or magnify becomes bigger, so when you focus on your blessings, then you find more for which to be grateful. “If you are grateful, I will surely give you more” (Qur’an 14:7).

Exercise:

- First connect with your feelings and feel gratitude for something you are grateful for. Then extend your gratitude beyond yourself for the greater community and do this exercise every day.
- “At the end of the week, read out loud the things that you have been grateful for and reflect on how gratitude may have affected your relationship with yourself, with Allah, and then with others” (Helwa, 2020: 41).

- The concept of awe in Islam is conveyed by the infinite power of God. When we look at God's creation, we find ourselves confronted with so vast an energy that no limit can be imagined. "A look at creation and the millions of truths secreted in the wonders of nature and the depths of man's own being provides the clearest indication of the scale of the power of the One Who has created it, for the rich and complex order of being admits of no other explanation" (Lari, 2022: 13).

Exercise:

- Go out in nature or someplace that you enjoy.
- Allow your heart to choose something around you to meditate on or simply notice.
- Take a moment to write down certain qualities that you witness in this natural object (a wave, a flower, or a shell, etc.). It is beautiful, soft, strong, or intricate? Can it move? Can it create life or take life? If it could speak, what would it say? Really listen, observe, and write down whatever comes to you.
- Pick out the names of Allah that most closely relate to the description you wrote down. Once you have found the correlating Divine names, spend three-five minutes repeating each name while you witness the object that reflects God's attributes and qualities.
- Take a moment to contemplate the reality that everything in existence is held together by the qualities of God.
- Contemplate how you would look at the world differently if you saw everything as a reflection of God (Helwa, 2020: 26-7).

Christian perspective on grace

Draper (2009: 57-59) writes that by reflecting on the ungraspable nature of beauty and the idea that we are to pass on the benefits of our personal transformation into love and joy onto others, then it flows like rain through us. Awakening to the beauty around us puts us in touch with those deeper places within.

"How often do we fail to notice the blessing of nature around us? It is not that a simple flower is beautiful or that a flowing river is tranquil, or that the raging sea is awesome.

The gift of such a sight or experience speaks of our reconnection with creation and the gift of its creator. When we are confronted by a truly sublime sight or event, such moments evoke a yearning within us that draw us into a different realm. The world within us and around us is transformed into an awareness of the divine and can spread a positive contagion of hope and love” (Draper, 2009: 59).

Exercise:

- Spend at least fifteen minutes outside reflecting on the beauty of a flower or something simple that you find beautiful. Ask what it says to you about life. What does it teach you? How might you grasp what you learn within the busyness of your everyday life?
- Reflect on a time when you felt deeply moved emotionally or spiritually. What prompted you to feel that way? How did you react and how long did it last?
- Can you envision cultivating this feeling of awe or inner bliss more often during the day, or looking for more opportunities to awaken to the divinity that is continuously available?
- Write your observation in your journal (Draper, 2009: 59).

Integrated lesson to promote grace

- 1) Greetings and questions or observations from the previous class.
- 2) Share the homework from the last class if comfortable. What did you notice or learn?
- 3) Present the information on grace and the subscale capacities from the ISIR.
- 4) Review the paragraphs from the authors on the perspective of each faith tradition about grace and the exercises.
- 5) Discuss similarities or differences between the faiths.
- 6) Meditation on grace facilitated during the online session.
 - Go inside, close your eyes, and take a few deep, slow, and conscious breaths.

- As you breathe, become aware of the gift of life flowing in and out of your being.
 - Place your awareness in your heart centre and note whether you feel gratitude for your life or whether there are other feelings coming to the surface. What is your heart telling you in this moment?
 - Take two-three more conscious slow breaths, breathing in the gift of life and letting go with the out breath anything that is not serving your highest good in the moment.
 - Part of grace is developing discernment of the beauty and the immanence of God who created it. This doesn't mean we ignore the difficult but rather we learn to integrate it into the greater reality of God's love. What gives you a sense of beauty and then brings you joy? Think of something beautiful and just focus on it for a minute or so.
 - Can you feel gratitude for all that is good and beautiful in the world? Does this give you a sense of freedom from the worry and difficulties in your daily world?
 - "Contemplate how you would look at the world differently if you saw everything as a reflection of God" (Helwa, 2020:27).
- 7) Share anything you would like to from the meditation. How does it feel to connect with the light and awe of God and does it help you see the world differently?

Recommended homework

- 1) Continue a daily practice such as meditating every morning for a few minutes using deep slow breaths, appreciating the gift of life, and setting your intention for the day. Notice ways that you can integrate the qualities of grace into everyday activities. It will also be helpful to keep a journal of your experiences and observations. Is it getting easier to be aware of the grace and meaning in your life, how well you met your intentions for the day, and other insights you gained from being mindful and purposeful during the day?
- 2) Pick one (or more) of the activities presented in this lesson if you are interested and write in your journal about your observations.

Module Three: Meaning

This domain reflects the ability to experience meaning in daily activities through a sense of purpose and a call for service, even in difficult circumstances. It involves the capacity to link activities and experiences to values, seeing them in ways that enhance functioning and wellbeing. Meaning is broken into two subscale capacities of purpose and service.

Purpose refers to the capacity to sense and experience a reason for the significance of life and existence. To find a sense of purpose, it may be helpful to formulate a personal mission statement. A personal mission statement, consciously formulated, answers some important existential questions. What gives meaning to your life? What is of significance and meaning in the universe? Is your life and the universe just a random process or does it carry some deeper purpose and significance? Is it just gathering more money, success, fame, and moments of pleasure, or is there some deeper thread and direction to your existence? How do you hold the pain and suffering that you and others around you experience? Do you feel defeated, or do they serve your evolution and growth? Contemplating and answering these questions can enhance your sense of meaning and purpose.

Service is the capacity to hear and respond to the call of helping others and to live in devotion to the benefit of the greater whole. Finding a line of work or a calling that is deeply meaningful to you and serves important needs of others and of life as a whole, enhances your sense of service. Manifesting this calling as an expression of your service can come in many forms - through your job, at home raising children, or in your relationships and interactions with others, or in working with nature or animals (Amram, 2020: 6-7).

Jewish perspective on meaning

Marcus (2016: 60) writes that as we begin to develop our spirituality, we sense a connection to something or someone higher than ourselves. It reminds us that there is more to life than meets the eye and that there is a bewildering mystery and purpose to the universe. This challenges us to take stock and rethink who we are in relation to what we see around us. This brings into sharper contrast the experience we have of everyday life which may seem mundane and far from divine. The crux of a spiritual awakening is to

not only experience the sublime moments, but to also search for and find the sacredness and the meaning in the mundane or boring routines, or to identify the beauty in the ugly places of the world, or at the times when we feel the lowest (Marcus, 2016: 60).

Exercise:

- Consider the details of how you create an identity for yourself. Do the material aspects determine your worth or are there other attributes that can be considered that give your life meaning (i.e., false self and true self).
- Take some time to write your obituary. Try writing it from different perspectives, such as the person you were not, or from the balance between what you have achieved and the person you have become. What would you like other people to read about you or what do you think others would write about your life?
- Does this help put your life in perspective and to be aware of what gives your life the most meaning (Marcus, 2016: 67-68)?

In reference to service, Marcus (2016: 92-93) writes that in developing spiritually, we are concerned about the path that we travel in the present moment and the small decisions that we make moment by moment. We cannot hold on to beauty or divinity, but when we let it go and allow it to flow through us, then it goes out to others. As we unite action with contemplation, being with doing, we begin to pass on to others that which we receive and start to become the change we want to see in the world. Instead of being a consumer of life, we become co-creators with the flow of life. Small sustainable acts of service flow like a river of life to those around you. As the depths of God call to your inner depths, you in turn are called to the inner depths of others, and then we will collectively begin to live a life of incomparable beauty and meaning. If you only seek to serve yourself, you will in the end lose the battle for your soul. “It is by discovering the noble art of battling against injustice for others who need you most that you will begin to find your calling” (Marcus, 2016: 92-93).

Exercise: Bringing benefit to others by shaping the story of “us”.

- Write the story of your life starting with the script you were given by your parents, teachers, etc. What is the bigger picture of world events in your story?

- What were the transformational events and people in your life?
- Then write the story you would like to leave behind, along with the communal story that you would like to see in your life. What do you wish to contribute? (Marcus, 2016: 99-101).

Muslim perspective on meaning

According to Hanefa, Sa'ari, and Siraj (2016: 9) individuals with high spiritual intelligence have the ability to contemplate the reason for being in the world and understand the connection of their soul to the Almighty. Life without purpose is a journey without direction and having a meaningful life will lead one to higher spiritual intelligence and to contemplate the purpose for their being. Mankind is the vice-regent of God who has responsibility not just toward God, but also toward all creation. The human soul has a unique attribute of knowing the truth which other created beings do not possess, and when humans understand the purpose and the meaning of their creation, and then act in accordance with the responsibility bestowed upon them by God, they will have a higher tendency to do good for others. The ability of man to learn and gain new experience is critical to understanding the purpose and meaning of life, and to move towards a high level of spiritual intelligence is to achieve human excellence in service to the Almighty (Hanefa, Sa'ari, & Siraj, 2016: 9).

Helwa concurs that our purpose is to be Allah's presence in the world.

Gratitude to Allah is not just manifested in words of praise, but also in charitable acts of service toward his creation. When you have what another person's soul needs, then Allah is answering the person's prayer through you. When you say yes to serving someone in need you are saying yes to being an instrument of God's love, compassion, generosity, and abundance. Sadaqah is the Arabic word for giving and means giving of a gift that is rightfully ours for the benefit of others and for the sake of Allah alone. It is not just giving money, but also inspiring and celebrating all acts of goodness, while avoiding what is wrong (Helwa, 2020: 201-203).

Exercise:

“When we connect to Allah and act as a conduit of his love, we will never run out of the passion to serve creation. We can bring kindness and love to all people by intentionally connecting our heart to the divine and allowing him to take lead the way. Try the following practice to foster and reflect the light of God on all of existence” (Helwa, 2020: 218).

- Place your hand on your heart.
- Observe the rise and fall of your chest with every breath.
- Imagine a Divine beam of light coming from above you, down through your head into your heart.
- As this Divine light fills your heart, witness what it feels like to be receiving God’s light and imagine the cells and atoms of your body drinking from the source of light until you feel fully saturated.
- Observe how the light spreads throughout your body, being conscious of the vibrating wave-like feeling as it spreads.
- Imagine branches of light blossoming from your heart into the earth. This allows divinely inspired light to expand deeper into the earth and outward to the people around you.
- Consciously send this light to your friends, family, co-workers, to a stranger, or even those who have hurt or offended you.
- Send your light to the plants, the animals, and all living things including the majesty of all of nature. Allow your inner light to spread like the morning sun to everyone on earth. As you consciously braid the Divine light of your heart with the heart of others, make a simple and sincere prayer to God, “Oh God, I pray that you bring your light into the heart of every person and creature, making the day joyful and fulfilling” (Helwa, 2020: 218-19).

Christian perspective on meaning

Draper (2009:44-45) writes that the goal of becoming spiritually intelligent is to live actively, not passively, by making good decisions, serving others in selfless love, and making the difference you would like to see in the world. Life is about an awareness of

your 'being' and then 'doing' from a place of mindful intention. The purpose of life is to grow into the best person that God created you to be, sharing the excitement of your own unfolding journey and passing on the benefits to others. As you become more fully present, more curious, more aware, more compassionate, and more servant minded toward those around you, the gift of life flows through you and you begin to share the treasure of your unfolding with others. As we tap into our innate spiritual intelligence, sharing will become a way of life, not just materially, but sharing stories and wisdom for our mutual journey and sharing the joy of life (Draper, 2009: 46).

Exercise:

Draper (2009: 54) refers to a Psalm (119: 27) about a person who meditates on God's ways, who spends time in serious contemplation of who they are in relationship to God and God's creation, and to beauty and love. The challenge today is to find time in our busy schedules to undertake this type of deep contemplation.

- Spend a few minutes each day reflecting on what it might mean for you and for the people around if you were to live with an awareness of your relationship to God and creation, and to the holy, the beautiful, and the good.
- What if this were your mission statement. Can you picture what your life would be like? How would it change your relationship to others?
- Write down your mission statement. What gives your life meaning and purpose?
- Make note of your observations in your journal and notice the changes from day to day.

Integrated lesson to promote meaning

- 1) Greetings and questions or observations from the previous class.
- 2) Share the results of your homework from the last class if comfortable. What did you notice or learn?
- 3) Present the information on meaning and the subscale capacities from the ISRI.

- 4) Review the paragraphs from the authors on the perspective of each faith tradition about meaning and the exercises.
- 5) Discuss similarities or differences between the faiths.
- 6) Meditation to promote meaning.
 - Go inside, close your eyes, and take a few deep, slow, and conscious breaths.
 - As you breathe, become aware of the gift of life flowing in and out of your being.
 - Place your awareness in the centre of your heart and notice whether you feel gratitude for your life or are other feelings coming to the surface. What is your heart telling you at this moment?
 - Take another deep, slow breath and bring the most important aspect of your life into your awareness. Is it your home, your family, your relationship to God, your body, or something else?
 - Accept that there are many aspects of your life that are important to you but focus on the one thing you have chosen as the most important.
 - Now picture divine love coming to you from above and flooding that part of your life with awe. Does this divine love give this part of your life more meaning?
 - Now let this divine love flow out to the other important aspects of your life.
 - Then let that love flow out into your community and notice whether there are ways that you can extend this critical aspect of yourself in the flow of divine love? Would others benefit from sharing this part of yourself? Would that feel good, or do other feelings come up?
 - When you are ready take another deep breath and come back into the present moment.
- 7) Share anything you would like to from the meditation. Were you able to connect with the light and awe of God and to share it with others?

Recommended homework

- 1) Continue a daily practice such as meditating every morning for a few minutes using deep slow breaths, appreciating the gift of life, and setting your intention for the day. Contemplate ways that you can have more meaning with purpose and service in your life. It will also be helpful to write in your journal about your experiences and observations. Is it getting easier to be aware of the meaning in your life and the traits of your SI, how well did you meet your intentions for the day, and any insights you gained from finding meaning and purpose during your daily activities.
- 2) Consider doing one of the exercises from this lesson that interests you and write in your journal about anything that you learned.

Module four: Transcendence

This domain reflects the ability to align with the sacred and transcend the egoic self with a sense of relatedness and holism to enhance functioning and wellbeing. Amram write that “transcendence has five subscale capabilities including higher self, holism, practice, relatedness, and sacredness” (Amram 2020: 10).

Higher self refers to the capacity to connect and receive guidance from a wise or higher self, higher or enlightened beings, or spirit. Guided imagination journeys in which we meet and have dialogue with enlightened beings such as Jesus, Mohammed, Mother Mary, King Solomon, or Abraham, are just a few ways of accessing the innate wisdom of our higher selves. You can also create access to your higher self by entering into dialogue with an image of yourself as you would like to be in ten or twenty years when you may be wiser, more compassionate, and more mature. Praying and asking for guidance from divinity or higher beings followed by deep listening can also be helpful in developing access to the wisdom of our higher self.

Holism refers to the capacity for inner and outer wholeness through integrating various aspects and seeing and experiencing their interrelatedness and oneness. Contemplating and seeing existence as embedded in a larger web of life on Earth, and more broadly in the cosmos, helps develop the sense of holism. A tree does not exist without the earth and soil that provide its nutrients, the sun that gives it energy, clouds and rain that provide

water, and carbon dioxide in the atmosphere that it converts into food for growth, and oxygen for us to breathe. Nothing in the universe can exist independently. There is no left without right. Even the darkness and light would have no meaning and would not exist without the other. Similarly, contemplating how each and every part within and outside of us is a part of a larger organism helps to develop a broader view and a more holistic perspective.

Practice refers to the ability to develop and apply your spiritual muscles through conscious routines such as meditation, prayer, inquiry, to set times for contemplation and inner quiet, or other practices designed to help with your inner development and spiritual growth. You develop your capacity to practice by setting aside regular daily or weekly times for meditation, prayer, or self-inquiry. Other useful practices can include developing a personal storehouse of stories, quotes, books, or sacred texts that you periodically refer back to, particularly in difficult moments. Allocating regular time for quiet contemplative walks in nature can also help in developing a healthy practice routine. Additionally, setting aside a special space in your living environment that contains objects, symbols, or art that reminds you to align with the sacred is also helpful in supporting the development of your practice.

Relatedness refers to the ability to experience yourself not as separate, but rather as belonging to and connected to a larger human community and the greater web of life as a whole. Practising empathy, putting yourself in others' shoes and listening to and looking at the world from their perspective help you feel more connected. Instead of seeing people and their faults as 'other', you can ask yourself to what extent you have even a small version of this within you. In seeing other people's suffering, reading the news or in your personal life, connecting with your heart and sending them compassion and care helps your sense of relatedness and connectedness. When witnessing your own suffering or that of others, you can reflect on the many people on the planet who are suffering the same circumstance, as we are rarely alone in our loneliness, pain, or health condition. Visualize taking your own and others' suffering into your heart as you inhale and breathe out your compassion to alleviate the suffering as you exhale. Though this may seem challenging at first, people often find it comforting and relaxing with a little practice.

Sacredness is the capacity to experience, align, and live in harmony with a universal life force, or the divine as immanent in our daily life and present in our world. You can cultivate your capacity for sacredness by turning your attention to experiences of awe and grace. As a practice, and in every moment, you can contemplate the mystery of existence and the mystery of life, or how we came to be living conscious beings made out of inert matter. This can give you a sense of awe and put you in touch with the mystery and the grace that is immanent within life and the physical world. In your daily life you can cultivate the sense of sacredness through spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, or reading inspired poetry or spiritual texts that touch your soul. In dealing with your daily problems, you can also turn to and find solace in the expression of the life force through nature (Amram, 2020: 10-11).

Jewish perspective on transcendence

Marcus writes that “ we are made in God’s image and this divine spark rests within every person as the core of the soul” (Marcus, 2016: 33). This is a common thread of humanity and a core of goodness in everyone, but as we go through life painful things happen and we gather baggage, or egotistic ways of coping with the difficulties. This can get in the way of our divine spark and make it difficult for us to be our best selves, and difficult to see the divine spark in others, or for them to see the divine spark in us. This does not absolve people of the responsibility for their actions or mean that we should trust everyone we meet. The task in the Jewish practice of Mussar is to do the internal work that allows the divine spark to shine through us and serve as a source of goodness and strength, and this will automatically create a mindset of respect and compassion for others.

Exercise:

- Use a daily mantra such as, “I play a small part in something greater than myself.”
- Contemplate how a sense of wonder or the sense of a greater intelligence (transcendence) fits into your daily life. Think of some examples and write about them.
- What do you experience as sacred? Consider all that gives your life a sense of meaning and is a source of inspiration.

- Go into nature and look for the patterns and rhythms in the natural environment. Does this awareness bring a sense of peace and sacredness?
- Watch without judgement and just observe your response to these questions, then write about any insights that you may have gained (Marcus, 2016: 210-11).

Muslim perspective on transcendence

Hanefa, Sa'ari, and Siraj (2016: 9-10) write that spiritual intelligence represents a process that involves orienting the individual's awareness and experience to the something beyond the normal human awareness, to the spiritual aspect of the self, or the transcendent realms. Self-transcendence is the ability to move beyond self-centred consciousness and to see things with a measure of freedom from biological and social conditioning. Transcendence is the spiritual perspective related to God-consciousness, or how mankind is related to God. It is an ability that exists outside ordinary consciousness in concepts such as holism, inter-connectedness, non-materialism, and others. Human creation is from the spark of God in which God gives man potentials or abilities in accordance with God's nature, not only for his own use, but also for the use of other human beings and all of life. From the Islamic perspective, human attributes and potentials are best summarized in the natures of Allah found in the ninety-nine names of Allah. The ability to develop God's attributes (natures of Allah) within the self will lead to a higher level of spiritual intelligence. For example, one of Allah's names is Al-Quaddus derived from the word *Quds* meaning pure and blessed. This name refers to God as free and perfect from any deficiency and holy in all aspects. To reach a high level of spiritual intelligence through the aspects of transcendence, humans should strive to develop the nine-nine natures of God within themselves.

Helwa writes that "everything on Earth points to God, and all life has a Divine spark; "I have fashioned him and breathed into him my spirit" (Qur'an 38:72). Our longing for something that this world has not been able to fulfil is the greatest evidence for a world beyond this realm. How could we long for something we have never known?" (Helwa, 2020: 32).

Exercise:

Helwa provides the following exercise.

“When you find yourself in conflict or in worry, ask yourself, “what am I needing that I did not receive,” and then write about how you feel. Once you have written down all your feelings circle or put a star next to any key words that feel important. Take a moment to feel what emotional, spiritual, or physical needs were unfulfilled” (Helwa, 2020: 33).

- Once you have identified your needs then go to the ninety-nine names of Allah and pick out the one that most closely relates to your need.
- Find a comfortable place to sit with your back straight and your body grounded. Breathe deeply and slowly several times.
- Slowly recite the name you have chosen one hundred times, as you slowly pull the vibration of each letter into your heart, or wherever you feel constriction.
- Notice how you feel afterward connecting with the higher aspects of Allah.
- Repeat this process for every unmet need you feel.
- How is it different turning to Allah to meet your needs instead of turning to yourself or other people?
- How has meeting your needs from a higher source helped you? Can it make a difference to others around you?
- Write what you have learned in your journal (Helwa, 2020: 73-75).

Christian perspective on transcendence

Draper (2009: 151-4) writes that divine flow is the creative, dynamic flow between our being and our doing where we must try to inhabit mystery, understanding that we do not need to know all of the answers to become spiritually mature. He further references the story in Genesis of Jacob who “dreamed of a ladder resting on Earth with its top reaching to the heaven and the angels of God descending and ascending on it. After he wakes, he says, ‘surely the Lord was in this place, and I was not aware of it’” (Genesis 28: 10-17). God is in and around us if only we realize it. We are standing on holy ground, for all ground is holy in God’s world, and all reality contains the magic of being alive. The task is to become spiritually aware of God’s presence and allow it to work through us more fully and dissolve our negative conditioned selves. As we make room for the unexpected,

we must simultaneously awaken to the world around us, to the people we are with and the place we are in, and the spirit that breathes through it all. We awaken to that which divinity wants to happen through us as we open ourselves to the possibility of giving ourselves to a higher cause that is non-ego driven and allowing our highest being to manifest in the world.

Exercise:

- Remember a time when something magical, unexpected, providential, or coincidental happened to you. What do you think the origin of this event was? Did you let it flow and feel gratitude for the mystery?
- How did the magic (transcendence) of this event affect you? Did you receive it as a gift, or did it disturb you?
- Meditate on how you could begin to live in divine flow more proactively and expect the magic of the unexpected.
 - Do you need to surrender a little more control of your life to your higher wisdom, to allow for the unexpected to work its own magic?
 - If so, how can you make more room in your life for transcendence?
 - Consider things that you still need to lighten your grip on and ask if there are ways to place more faith and trust in the divine intelligence in your life (Draper, 2009: 154).

Integrated lesson to promote transcendence

- 1) Greetings and questions or observations from the previous class.
- 2) Share the results of your homework from the last class if comfortable. What did you notice or learn?
- 3) Present the information on transcendence and the subscale capacities from the ISIR.
- 4) Review the paragraphs from the authors on the perspective of each faith tradition about transcendence and the exercises.

- 5) Discuss similarities or differences between the faiths.
- 6) Meditation on transcendence facilitated during the online session.
- Go inside, close your eyes, and take a few deep, slow, and conscious breaths.
 - As you breathe, become aware of the gift of life flowing in and out of your being.
 - Now connect to the earth and the life force coming from her. Breathe this in and out a few times grounding yourself to the Earth.
 - As you consciously breathe notice any tension that you are holding in your body and breathe into it and ask the muscles to relax and be at peace.
 - Now picture yourself walking on a path in your favourite landscape; it can be the beach, or in the mountains, or in a garden.
 - As you walk along the path you come to a comfortable bench and you sit down and rest, enjoying the solitude and a beautiful view.
 - As you sit peacefully, a golden bubble of light of your higher self comes down around you and creates a sanctuary space, with immense waves of love and acceptance coming from this aspect of yourself, and you realize this part of your soul is connected to the divine source.
 - As you enjoy the feelings of love and peace, you can ask your higher self for advice or a question about something you would like to know.
 - Sit in silence and listen to the answer. It may be in words, or images, or a feeling, or it may come at a later time.
 - Thank your higher wisdom and watch as the golden light returns back to source, but know this compassion and wisdom are always with you and available at all times if you seek it and ask for help.
 - Enjoy the view one more time and then get up and walk back along the path, and come into your body in the present time, aware of your surroundings. Open your eyes and stretch.

- 7) Share anything you would like to from the meditation. How does it feel to connect with your higher wisdom? What did you learn?

Recommended homework

- 1) Continue a daily practice such as meditating every morning for a few minutes using deep slow breaths, appreciating the gift of life, and set your intention for the day. It will also be helpful to keep up your journal of your experiences and observations. What is changing for you as you develop an SI practice? Is it helping to meet your intentions for the day, and any insights you gained from being mindful and purposeful during the day? Are you becoming more comfortable with the concept of transcendence?
- 2) Consider doing one of the exercises on transcendence that interest you and write about anything you learned in your journal.

Module five: Truth

Amram writes that this domain “reflects the ability to be present to love and peacefully surrender to truth, manifesting open receptivity, presence, humility, and trust in ways that enhance daily functioning and wellbeing” (Amram, 2020:12). Truth is broken into six subscale capabilities of ego-lessness, equanimity, inner wholeness, openness, presence, and trust.

Ego-lessness refers to the capacity to live humbly, in alignment, and in surrender to that which is greater than the small, skin-encapsulated ego self, regardless of the name you might give it. Practising devotion to that which is greater than your individual self, be it Truth or the will of God, can support your ego-lessness. Other spiritual practices that can help on the path to ego-lessness are meditation, prayer, inner inquiry, and service.

Equanimity refers to the capacity to remain centred in peace, maintaining mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper even when things are chaotic or upsetting within or outside of you. You can develop equanimity through spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, and inner inquiry. Whenever you feel reactive, when your fight-or-flight response is activated, you can remind yourself to slow down, take some deep breaths, extend your exhalation, and notice the sensations of your body and your feet on the

ground. Reminding yourself that in fighting with reality you usually end up losing, helps you develop a sense of equanimity.

Inner wholeness refers to the capacity to accept and integrate all parts of yourself including your wounded parts, into a coherent whole, and to be comfortable in your own skin. Noticing your experience and accepting all of your parts and sub-personalities, fostering dialogue with each, and finding their gift can support the development of your inner wholeness. Practising mindfulness, curiosity, and self-compassion also develops your inner wholeness. Mindfulness is the conscious and non-judgmental awareness of the experience of the present moment. Mindfulness is aided by an open attitude of self-acceptance and supported by your curiosity. With curiosity you have the interest and desire to learn, explore, understand, and fully experience whatever is happening. Self-compassion involves a non-judgmental, openhearted, caring, and kind attitude towards acknowledging and remaining open to, and willing to be with, your pain and suffering. It can be thought of as the attitude associated with gently putting your hand on your own heart and tenderly saying to yourself, “I am suffering here, and I care.”

Openness involves the capacity to remain receptive to and embracing of the experience and the flow of life rather than resistance to it. You can develop the capacity to be open through practising acceptance and seeing if you can tolerate any experience, even those you don’t like. It is best to start this practice with small steps when dealing with difficult experiences. When you find yourself resisting, you can begin with opening to and accepting your resistance. Practising and developing the capacity to inquire and be curious about your experience also supports your openness. You can often pause and ask yourself, “What am I experiencing now?” Whether you are experiencing joy, love, gratitude, passion, contentment and peace, or sadness, anger, hatred, anxiety, loneliness, or fear, you can always approach it with an attitude of curiosity. You can ask yourself, “What is this experience like? How do you feel it in your body? What images, energy, thoughts, and associations does it have?” Can you practise opening to and allowing what is real as it unfolds in each and every moment? Practising forgiveness also supports the development of openness.

Presence reflects the capacity to remain present, conscious, and aware of what is happening in the here and now and to remain focused on the issue and task at hand,

rather than letting the mind wander off. You can develop the capacity for presence through a meditation practice, initially with a concentration practice and then as concentration develops, moving into more open awareness-oriented meditation practices. You can also develop your presence by learning to concentrate and focus on the words and their meaning during spiritual practices such as prayer, instead of rote memorization. Pausing, scanning the body's five senses, and specifically sensing the arms and legs, hands, and feet (simultaneously if possible), as well as paying attention to what you are hearing and seeing in the moment, supports the development of your presence.

Trust refers to the capacity to remain steady in confidence, faith, and optimism that things will work out for the best, or at least be okay. Developing trust is not an easy or simple task. You can begin by asking, "Are you okay now, in this moment?" Perhaps life has been difficult and challenging, or even overwhelming at times, yet you survived and arrived at this moment, and you are okay now. You can notice that your breath happens on its own, without your needing to make an effort. Your body functions with billions of cells absorbing nutrients, hydrating, and cleansing toxins, and even your thoughts appear in your mind on their own. Learning to give up control, a little bit at a time and noticing that you are still okay, helps you to develop trust that things are all right and will remain that way. This emerging capacity for trust is the antidote to the fear that often drives the need to manipulate and control. For some people, trust can be developed through faith in a higher power such as God or seeing the role model of those who overcome adversity and achieved enlightenment, such as the prophet Mohammed or Jesus. Sometimes the capacity for trust has been broken through a difficult set of early life circumstances, in which case psychotherapy or some trauma-healing work may be of help. Ultimately, deep, lasting trust requires dedicated spiritual practice and ultimately our surrender through faith. It may also involve the shifting of the identity from being a separate individual whose life and existence seems temporary and conditional to identity with the One (Amram, 2020: 12).

Jewish perspective on truth

Marcus (2016: 114-5) writes that truth is seen as the correct representation of an event, object or feeling. Judaism, however, teaches that truth is much more complicated because as humans we can only perceive a fraction of what is happening in the world. In

addition, human memory is faulty and influenced by our experiences and preconceived notions. Given the human limitations on both perception and recall, Judaism teaches that only God sits upon the throne of truth, and humans can best perceive that which is false or untrue. Only God knows what is true since God knows all things and can see from all perspectives simultaneously. The task for us is to try to see the truth through the eyes of the people around us, and from many perspectives to maintain a balance in our perception of what is true, and to seek a higher truth away from that which is false.

Exercise:

- Develop a mantra to help you to remember to be truthful such as from Exodus 32:7: “Distance yourself from false matter.”
- Observe yourself during the day and note times when you are tempted to veer from the strict truth from fear of consequences, such as hurting another’s feelings, or to make yourself feel or look better to others. It is also best to be authentic in our truth and come from a place of good intentions. Be aware when you are telling the truth to hurt others or to gain points in a power struggle.
- If you do stray from the truth, look inside to the factors that may have led you to an untruth. It may be an indication that another soul trait is out of balance, such as humility.
- Work on developing trust to overcome any fear of being strictly truthful and then manage possible negative reactions. We can learn to trust that our authenticity will be respected and that our families or others will support us in our truth (Marcus, 2016: 123-25).

Mussar teaches that trust is short for trust in God, which brings with it a powerful sense of confidence, and trusting in a higher purpose that things will work out. When our mind creates fear and worry over all of the terrible things that could happen, most of the time very few of those things actually happen. Trust allows us to believe in a benevolent universe where most of the time things work out for the best, so we can let go of the burden of fear. Trusting God as a life strategy is difficult, but it can help bring many other soul traits (SI capabilities) into balance and it is an antidote to fear. Living in fear of what may happen can inhibit our spiritual journey, even though trust is counterintuitive in our

modern world and difficult to develop. It is best to start working on developing trust in God early and with persistence (Marcus, 2016: 91-92).

Marcus (2016:176-7) also writes on the soul trait of equanimity stating that this involves separating the higher mind from the thinking mind and stepping into the role of watcher from the deeper self that is behind or underneath the thought. It does not mean that you are removed from life but rather remain an active participant in the world, and experience both positive and negative situations in a more mindful and less reactive way from a higher level of consciousness.

Exercise:

In the lesson on the soul trait of trust, Marcus suggests that trust in something higher is the key for getting through life without excessive fear or worry. At the same time, we cannot expect God to do all of the work but should strive toward a balance of common sense and alignment with our higher self and divinity.

- In your daily practice recite the mantra that you have chosen to help with trust in the higher source.
- If you are facing a challenge or there is something you are worried about, ask God for help. The outcome may or may not be what you wanted to happen, but whatever the outcome, say “thank you.” By asking for help we are opening up ourselves to a positive energy. Maybe we are asking the divine spark within us or our higher wisdom, but it may give us the patience to get through a difficult time.
- Surrender your need for a particular outcome during the day and let higher wisdom flow through you. What is the outcome of this practice?
- Focus on the needs of other people, which is not a task we can outsource to Divinity. Proactively look for ways to assist others and notice your divine spark shining through you (Marcus, 2016: 98-99).

Muslim perspective on truth

The Muslim perspective is also focused on trusting God in both the positive and negative aspects of life and Helwa writes of both trust and equanimity.

To know our Lord, we must learn to embrace our life instead of trying to escape it. God speaks to us both through our blessings and through our trials. When God blesses us with abundance, He is calling us toward his names, The Most Generous (Al-Karim), and the Most Grateful (Ash-Shakur). When we stay faithful and trust in Allah in times of difficulty, we are getting to know God through his quality of Most Patient (As-Sabur) (Helwa, 2020: 50).

She provides a quote from the Qur'an, "God will find a way for those who are mindful of him. And he will provide for him from sources he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. God will accomplish His purpose. God has appointed a measure for everything" (Qur'an 65: 2-3).

In Islamic spirituality "muraqaba" is the practice of observing, mindfulness, or watching over the fleeting and constantly changing projections of the mind. With meditation we learn how to make the distinction between who we are and what we think. When we keep aligning our focus and turning our energy toward Allah, a growing peace (equanimity) begins to slowly blossom within us (Helwa, 2020: 237).

Exercise:

- Sit in a comfortable position, with your back straight and your feet firmly on the floor.
- Focus on your breath. Think as you inhale through your nose, "Breathing in" and as you exhale through your mouth think to yourself "Breathing out."
- As you bring consciousness to your breath notice how you start to breathe more deeply and slowly.
- As you witness your breath, if thoughts come into your mind, do not shut them down or resist them, simply acknowledge, and observe them as you might observe the clouds passing in the sky or leaves floating by on a flowing river, then return your awareness to your breath.
- For two to three minutes sit in a state of "muraqaba" observing your passing thoughts, without analysing or judging them.

- Every time you start to analyse your thoughts it helps to return your awareness to your breath or the name “Allah.”
- Notice how the name of Allah resembles the gentle flow of the inhalation and exhalation of your breath. What is it like to shift your awareness from your constantly changing thoughts to an awareness of and trust in an eternal and unchanging God?
- Take a moment to briefly write how you feel after this practice (Helwa, 2020: 237-8).

Christian perspective on truth

Draper (2009: 52-3) writes on the concept of trust from the perspective of love for God, for ourselves, and then spreading this love to others through trusting the flow of life. When we can heal our inner wounds and ego self, we make room for love and more trust to enter into our lives. He reflects on the fact that we affect the world around us and it in turn affects us, whether positively or negatively. We can share the benefits of our growing spiritual intelligence through the acts of generosity, kindness, humility, stillness, presence, and service, regardless of the circumstances. This orientation leads to the goal of the journey which is to embody more love and trust in the flow of life. The purpose is to touch deeper parts of our innate wisdom and spiritual potential to build a bridge between our being and doing. This unlocks our spiritual intelligence, and we begin to touch the lives of others in the process. Our purpose is not to achieve or do more, but to trust in the flow of life, to be present in the moment, and allow God to work through us. “We seek to flourish more as fully human creatures, created neither to judge nor to hoard the best things in life, but to become truly a part of an unfolding vision of the beauty of everyday life. Such an outlook will be a gift to all those we come in contact with” (Draper, 2009: 53).

In discussing integrity and wholeness, he states that we have the potential to be whole, like a completed jigsaw puzzle, with all of our parts integrated into one being. We are mind, body and soul, and nothing is missing. Being whole is about wellbeing; being at peace in each situation, easy or difficult, about healing and letting go of old wounds and

the ego defences that come with them. Being whole is also about knowing who you are and acting from the core of who you are in love and service (Draper, 2009: 63).

Exercise:

- Reflect on awakening to the whole being that really you are. What would that look like? How much does your job, your car, your relationships, or other external things determine your self-worth and identity?
- What would happen if you changed the way you see yourself and stopped identifying with the things you have accumulated or accomplished? Who would you be? How might this affect your relationships or how you spend your time?
- Is there a point when you can start living as a “whole” person, living in the flow, trusting your life to unfold in God’s love? What would that be like in your daily life?
- Write in your journal about your insights (Draper, 2009: 63).

Integrated lesson to promote truth

- 1) Greetings and questions or observations from the previous class.
- 2) Share the results of your homework from the last class if comfortable. What did you notice or learn?
- 3) Present the information on truth and the subscale capacities from the ISIR.
- 4) Review the paragraphs from the authors on the perspective of each faith tradition about truth and the exercises.
- 5) Discuss similarities or differences between the faiths.
- 6) Meditation on truth
 - Go inside, close your eyes, and take a few deep, slow, and conscious breaths.
 - As you breathe, become aware of the gift of life flowing in and out of your being, and the gift of life flowing in and out of all of us.

- Now connect to the earth and the life force coming from her. Breathe this in and out a few times grounding yourself to the Earth.
 - As you consciously breathe note any tension that you are holding in your body and breathe into it and ask the muscles to relax and be at peace.
 - Now bring your breath into your heart centre and take a few deep breaths there.
 - Become aware first of your physical body, breathe, then of your emotions, what are you feeling in this moment, breathe, and then become aware of your spiritual being and take another deep breath.
 - Note if it is easy or difficult to see yourself as a whole being with many different aspects.
 - See yourself as whole and complete, and then send love to all these aspects of yourself from your heart centre.
 - Then feel the love of the Creator flowing into all of the aspects of yourself, body, mind, and soul.
 - Allow this love to give you a sense of peace, and trust that your life is flowing as God intended and will continue to flow perfectly into the future in all situations.
 - Take a few more deep breaths inhaling this trust in God and the presence of your whole self.
 - Then slowly come back to your surroundings, open your eyes, and stretch.
- 7) Share anything you would like to from the meditation. How does it feel to connect with your higher wisdom and trust that your life is flowing as God intends? What did you learn?

Recommended homework

- 1) Continue a daily practice such as meditating every morning for a few minutes using deep slow breaths, appreciating the gift of life, and set your intention for the day. Has it been helpful to keep up your journal of your experiences and observations.

Are you developing more and more SI? Has connecting to that which is transcendent helped you to develop more trust in the flow of your life? Consider ways you may have changed after participating in the five SI sessions with the other faiths. Write about any reflections you have on participating in the SI sessions and doing the practices now that we are at the end.

- 2) Consider doing one of the exercises on truth that interests you and write about anything you learned. Do you think it will be helpful to continue to develop your SI after the project is over?

3.4 Recommendations for continued development of spiritual intelligence

At the end of the individual Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report suggestions are included that can be used as a guide to further develop spiritual intelligence. Some of the practices that are generally helpful in developing and maturing spiritual intelligence include developing a daily spiritual practice. The following are some examples.

- Daily meditation or prayer or establish a routine inner practice.
- Building and maintaining a storehouse of stories, quotes, teachings, or other forms of time-proven wisdom that can be used in moments of difficulty or challenge, or to gain inspiration.
- It is also helpful to practise inner and outer quiet moments during the day, and opening up to insight, or to contact with God, or to the concept or term that you feel comfortable with to reference the sacred.
- Setting daily and weekly times for self-reflection, rejuvenation, and self-care such as enjoying a walk in a natural setting.
- Using rituals, rites, or ceremonies to mark transitions between major life events or simply between meetings or daily activities.

The report can also be used to target more specific domains or capacities related to spiritual intelligence. To cultivate gratitude set a timer and pause at various points during the day to remind yourself that life is a gift. Before going to bed each night spend a few minutes remembering or journaling a few things that you feel grateful for from your day.

For an advanced practice, some challenging moments can be included and look for the hidden blessings, or lessons that may come from them.

It is best to focus on one area at a time and devote a whole month or longer to forming a new habit based on a particular competency. For example, spend a month to consciously cultivate greater gratitude. Once you are more established with your gratitude practice, then focus your attention on another spiritual intelligence domain. Some areas and domains may require more thought and insight about the practices and approaches that are most appropriate or effective for you. For example, working on becoming more egoless might involve first noticing when being right is important to you, and then inquiring as to why it is important, and to which part of you. You might also notice when you look at others with judgement, focusing on what they need to do to improve, then observing yourself and inquiring about it.

Discerning the approaches and practices required to develop other SI capacities may be more subtle, such as developing true equanimity or trust. For example, it is not easy to will ourselves not to get upset when things do not go the way we want them to. That is where other, less direct practices such meditation and prayer, which require longer-term devotion, may be more appropriate (Amram, 2020: 12-13).

3.5 Chapter summary

The goal of this research is to study spiritual intelligence in the context of community interfaith dialogue among Jewish, Muslim, and Christian congregations. The intended result is to promote increased spiritual intelligence for more mutual understanding among participants, that then promotes peaceful co-existence and may serve as a model in other communities.

This chapter included sources for promoting spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic Faiths that were compared for common elements, and then integrated into lessons based on the five domains of the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS). This served as the basis to develop an introductory model and five training modules to promote SI for participants from the three congregations. The short form Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) developed by Amram and Dryer (2008) was selected to assess the spiritual intelligence of participants in this research. The hope is that building upon the spiritual strengths of

the three faiths to develop and evaluate a training course to promote SI, which builds upon the positive religious values of each faith, may be valuable in promoting interfaith dialogue and interreligious understanding.

The aim of the next chapter is to describe the development and implementation of the complete research model, including the presentation of the five training models described in this chapter. This will include recruitment of volunteers to participate in the research project, presentation of the SI training modules, and facilitation of the interfaith dialogues, along with the use of the qualitative and quantitative evaluation instruments.

CHAPTER 4

DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH MODEL

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a review of the research method for the proposed model to promote spiritual intelligence (SI) in interfaith dialogue (IFD) in the Abrahamic religions. This will be followed by a description of the development and implementation of the research design. The intended result of the research is to provide a format for training SI in multi-faith settings that may promote SI among the participants and lead to improved understanding and positive interfaith interactions. The intent is that this model will have value for Abrahamic interfaith understanding and that the research design may also serve as a model in other interfaith communities.

4.2 Research format

The project was conducted once a week, over an eight-week period in April and May of 2023. In coordination with academic advisors, it was decided to conduct the sessions virtually rather than in person for several reasons. When the pandemic began in 2020, the three congregations began to offer virtual services to comply with public health mandates. As restrictions were lifted, they continued to offer a hybrid from of worship of both virtual and in person meetings, and as a result some members of the congregations chose to continue to attend virtual services. Because long-standing relationships had already been established with the three congregations, I was confident that it would be possible to recruit participants and continue to foster a sense of community engagement via a virtual platform.

The previous year I had also participated in a similar project among the three congregations that was conducted virtually by a graduate student from Har HaShem. The topic was on promoting social justice initiatives among the three faiths, and a few of the members of that group were interested in, and subsequently did participate in this project. As a result, I was able to build on a successful model of working virtually with the three congregations that had already been developed and successfully tested. I have also taught spiritual development and meditation classes virtually for six years, so felt comfortable in teaching and facilitating meetings in this format. An additional factor was

that I had moved to the Midwest before the project was implemented and in-person sessions would have necessitated a thousand-mile drive back to Colorado and finding temporary lodging for the course of the eight-week project.

A smaller cohort of three members from each congregation was chosen so that each participant would have a chance to share their experiences, ask questions, and fully engage in the discussion in every ninety-minute session. A larger cohort may have limited the amount of time that each member had to join the discussion. It is also my experience in teaching inner spiritual development and meditation classes, that it is a unique process in which the instructor should monitor and notice the reactions and needs of each student throughout each session. This requires different skills than teaching a purely academic subject or doing a presentation on objective information. Teaching inner development and personal awareness requires the instructor to be self-aware and model their own spiritual intelligence, have an awareness of each student, and to be fully present for each one. This would be a challenge with a larger number of participants. My role was to facilitate or present information in each of the sessions and then observe and record the responses. I answered questions if asked by the participants, but then resumed my role as facilitator and observer and did not participate in the discussions.

Recruiting participants

As previously discussed, the community partners involved in this research included St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, the Har HaShem Jewish Congregation, and the Islamic Centre of Boulder, all located within a mile of one another on the same street in Boulder, Colorado. The initial step to begin the research was to contact the leadership of the three congregations and reintroduce the project by providing the details for the eight weeks, along with expectations for participants. Each congregation assisted in sending out announcements and identifying congregation members who might be interested in participating. Individual members were also contacted who had previously expressed an interest in the project. An introductory e-mail was sent to each prospective participant with a description of the study, including expectations and ethics procedures. The message included an offer to discuss any question or concerns via Zoom prior to making the decision to participate. Several of those contacted elected not to participate after reading this information. The recruitment process took about six weeks to complete and to engage

three participants from each congregation. Since it was the Holy season for all three faiths, those who volunteered were consulted to determine the best day and time to meet that did not conflict with Ramadan, Passover, or Easter. It was particularly challenging for Muslims to participate during Ramadan, so those who volunteered proved to be especially interested in promoting interfaith understanding.

Ethics procedures and informed consent

The ethics procedures were comprehensively explained during an introductory session, including the information from the approved North-West University ethics application (Appendix C). Participants were given the choice to opt out of the study after receiving the ethics information, but all chose to participate in the research. The ethics procedures included an explanation of the risks and benefits of the study. The study does not present physical risk factors, but there could be an emotional response to receiving a spiritual intelligence score that was different than participants might have anticipated or that did not match their self-perceived spiritual strengths. It was important for participants to understand that the purpose of the SI score was to provide a profile of key strengths with areas for opportunities and growth. The instrument relies on self-report data and is not an absolute measure of an intelligence and does not indicate that one is more or less spiritually capable. It is intended to provide guidance in areas that one may wish to work on or learn more about. The online Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) provides a relative score in each competency, with recommendations on how to apply the competency and methods to further develop SI abilities. Another risk may be the possibility of an interfaith misunderstanding developing during the facilitated interfaith dialogues. The facilitated interfaith discussions were based on Swidler's framework of first developing mutual understanding aimed at positive dialogue and participant engagement to minimize this risk (Swidler, 1983: 15).

The benefits of this research include the possibility of improving individual spiritual intelligence and promoting better life satisfaction. By demonstrating the potential to promote spiritual intelligence among the three faiths, participants may then have a positive experience of interfaith interactions. This may foster an individual inner capacity for compassion and altruism which may improve mutual understanding and cooperation

among the religions. This research may also provide resources for other community congregations to promote SI and positive interfaith dialogue.

4.3 Research method

As described in Chapter One, a mixed method explanatory sequential design employing both quantitative and qualitative data collection was used for this project (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 221-24). The sequence of this research included an introductory module on the project, after which the participants were sent an NWU ethics consent form via DocuSign, that was returned by each participant prior to beginning the study. They then took an initial ISIS and received their first Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report (ISIR). The following week they participated in an initial facilitated interfaith dialogue (IFD). The next five weeks consisted of training sessions on the five domains of SI that were correlated with the literature from the three faiths, as described in Chapter Three. Next, the participants re-took the ISIS to determine whether their scores had improved. The last session was a second facilitated interfaith dialogue, and then participants were asked to complete a subjective survey of their experience. All of the participants submitted their qualitative survey within the week following the final class on the SI domains.

The purpose was to evaluate both the effectiveness of SI training measured through pre and post ISIS scores, followed by the participants' opinion of the value of the training on their ability to engage in interfaith dialogue. This involved a three-phase data collection process in which the participants' ISIS scores were compared pre-and- post training to determine if their SI has improved. The third qualitative phase included a facilitated interfaith dialogue, which was evaluated with a questionnaire with a series of open-ended questions. The overall intent of this design was to assess whether the qualitative assessment from the survey demonstrated a positive relationship to the quantitative results from the participants' ISIS scores.

Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale

The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) developed by Amram and Dryer (2008) was used as a pre- and post-assessment tool. The ISIS forty-five-item short form, self-report instrument contains twenty-two subscales assessing separate SI capabilities and has five separate domains. (Amram & Dryer 2008: 2). The ISIS instructions ask

participants to indicate the frequency of behaviours over the past 6 to 12 months using a six-point Likert scale with the following labels: rarely or almost never; very infrequently; somewhat infrequently; somewhat often; very frequently; always or almost always. Participants are encouraged not to leave items blank and to use their best guess if they are unsure about a particular item. I have taken the long-form ISIS and worked with certified counsellors on Dr Amram's staff to improve my SI based on my personal results of the ISIS. Prior to beginning the project, I also completed the training and became a Certified Spiritual Intelligence Coach with Dr Amram's organization, Intelligensi (<https://intelligensi.com/>).

Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report

The following narratives in each of the sections are taken from the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report (ISIR) (Amram, 2020) that was sent to me after my individual survey was taken and scored. The intended purpose of the SI score results is to gain insights into self-perception of strengths and opportunities and suggest practices that will help to develop spiritual intelligence. During the introductory session participants were told that it was important to note the limitations of self-reporting instruments, as selecting the answers may be influenced by self-perceptions that can be more positive or hopeful, or they can be more self-critical depending on the orientation of the respondent. The focus of the ISIR is less on the absolute score, which might be less reliable, and instead focuses more on relative strengths and opportunities for improvement. Receiving a higher score in some dimensions might either be a justified and accurate self-perception, or a tendency to think more highly of oneself than might be objectively true, or some combination of both. Conversely, having a relatively low score in some dimensions may reflect a lower actual ability in that dimension, or just a more modest self-assessment. It is therefore more useful to focus on understanding relative strengths and assets and on opportunities for further growth, rather than comparisons to others or trying to find an absolute score.

The individual ISIR gives participants charts with their scores in each domain that are labelled with the following labels: 1) Strengths are the areas that tend to score the highest and can be most leveraged, coloured in green, 2) Assets are other capacities and areas that can be leveraged, coloured in blue, and 3) Opportunities are the areas with the greatest potential for development and growth, coloured in yellow. Under an overall SI

score, scores are also provided for the five main domains and the twenty-two sub-scale capability measures. For each domain there are also suggestions and tips for further developing and applying these competencies. When reviewing the self-assessment results, it is best to look at the opportunities and note that these are all relative to individual capacities. It is recommended to minimize a deficit mentality and avoid comparison with others or self-criticism. It is best to approach this process with self-compassion, curiosity, and to leverage strengths when working on opportunities (Amram, 2020: 2-5).

4.4 Implementation of the research model

The following steps were followed to implement the research model as described above. The content of each session is fully described in Chapter Three and was closely followed during each session.

Introductory session

The introductory module had been developed and previously presented at adult faith education classes at St. Andrew and was used again as the first session of the project. A virtual invitation was sent out two weeks prior to the session giving participants time to adjust their schedules. The introductory session began with an overview of the session. Each participant then gave a brief introduction of their first name and faith tradition, and what interested them about this project. I then introduced myself and gave the background of the research project and my relationship with St. Andrew. This was followed by a Power Point presentation with the relevant information on spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue, and the connection of the two concepts.

The initial announcement to participate in the project included the specific steps of the study, the topic of each of the eight sessions, along with the ethics requirements, and these were presented again. The ISIS was introduced with the five domains and an explanation of the pre- and post-ISIS that they would be taking. An overview of the initial and final IFD was also given and the final subjective survey of their opinion and how these elements would be integrated to determine the results of the study. It was also explained that the results would be sent to them after the University had approved them.

Next, there was an overview of the ethics procedures and the informed consent process. The risks and benefits of the study were presented, along with the procedure that would be used to ensure their confidentiality and to obtain their consent. This was followed by an opportunity to ask questions, and an offer to make an individual appointment to ask for clarification on any the points of the ethics procedures. After the discussion of risks and benefits participants were also given an opportunity to ask questions or provide comments, and there were none.

Next the procedures for ensuring their confidentiality were explained. They were asked to create a unique code for submitting all their assessments and surveys that consisted of the four-digit day and month of their birth, the first two letters of their middle name, and the letter J, M, or C to denote their faith. The next step was to create a free email account using this code, and to use this code to take the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Survey (ISIS), and when submitting all their information. Individualized NWU Informed Consent forms (Appendix C) were sent out to each participant via DocuSign, and all were returned within the first week. Each consent was stored in a coded and locked confidential computer file that is only accessible to me.

The session ended with a description of the steps for the following week, including taking the first ISIS, and a review of the format for the first IFD that would be sent to them. Lastly there was an opportunity to discuss the information or share their impressions. Most of the participants expressed an interest in the learning more about spiritual intelligence and had a positive response to the opportunity to engage in dialogue and learn more about one another and the other faiths.

Initial Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Survey

Following the introductory session, instructions and the link for taking the ISIS was sent to each participant. This included how to set up a distinct email account using their individualized code and suggestions for which websites offered free email accounts. There was a step-by-step description of how to access the free short-form ISIS on the Intelligensi website. All the participants submitted their initial ISIR the first week, but two participants had difficulty navigating the Intelligensi website and required personalized instruction. All the initial ISIRs were stored in a coded email account accessible only to me.

Initial interfaith dialogue

Swidler's framework for IFD is based on first finding common ground that can then build to deeper stages of interaction and was used as a basis to design the formats of the IFD in this study (Swidler, 1983: 15). According to Swidler (1983: 15), the first dialogue begins with the goal of acknowledging commonalities and discovering shared values and experiences, which will then create a sense of cohesiveness. The most difficult points of differences should not be addressed at first, but later in the process as the relationship and understanding develop. He states that the aim is to first develop cohesiveness within the members so that religious differences can be explored in the next phases in safety and respect (Swidler, 1983: 24).

The day after the introductory session an e-mail with the following message was sent to all the participants with the outline for the initial interfaith discussion that was scheduled for the following week.

This session is designed to begin to learn more about each other in a positive way. Each of you will get a chance to speak for about five minutes and will be asked to share the answers to the following questions.

1. State your first name.
2. Where were you born (City, State, Country)?
3. Does your family identify with a culture (e.g., Scandinavian, Irish, Egyptian, etc.).
4. What faith tradition where you raised in?
5. What values or skills did you get from your culture or faith tradition that has helped you the most in life, or has been particularly important to you?
6. Was there a person or mentor who helped you develop this value or skill, and in what way did they help you?
7. After everyone has shared, each person will be invited to respond to something that another member of the group shared. You can ask a question to learn more, give feedback, share an insight that you gained, or whatever you genuinely would like to say to that person.

Results of first interfaith dialogue

The first participant to share was a Christian who was born in the Midwest and raised as a Catholic. She had experienced religion as punitive and as a child learned that she was a sinner with a narrow path to salvation. As she grew older, she began searching for different answers outside of her religion, but felt her background gave her the ability to question religious values and the traditional image of a judgemental God. Her father influenced her the most on her personal journey to find a path that was more relevant and that allowed her to find the values and purpose that were meaningful to her. He encouraged her to do the best she could with any circumstance and to stand up for those who were less fortunate.

Next a Muslim shared that he had been born in Pakistan. He is Punjabi, and as a child, religion was more of a shared cultural experience than a spiritual awareness. The value he most appreciated was the sense of family and community and the constant support that he received. As he grew older, he became more curious about the deeper aspects of Islam and began reading the Qur'an and studying with teachers who could help him learn about the meaning of his life and connection to Allah. His Grandmother taught him to have hope and faith in God regardless of the circumstances, and that Allah would help him get through everything and work in his life for the best outcome. In college he also became interested in ways that the Abrahamic faiths were similar and if the three faiths could get along better.

A Jew shared next that she had been born in Pittsburgh and was descended from Polish and Russian immigrants. Her family was socially liberal and promoted community service, and her early experience of Judaism was more cultural than religious. After she got married her husband encouraged her to learn more about their faith, and they found a non-denominational congregation where the Rabbi encouraged her to learn about Judaism in a deeper context. Her culture and later studies helped her develop the value of giving to one's community and being politically active in a progressive way. She enjoyed the process and the freedom of studying and learning and eventually got her PhD.

Another Christian shared that she had been born in the Midwest, and again had questioned her early training in a traditional form of Christianity. She began searching for

more answers and then shared a later difficult experience of losing a child. She stated that a Pastor at a more progressive church helped her to start to think about why bad things happen to good people, and if her child was in heaven. As she got older, she began to search for a deeper experience and more meaning in her religious practice and her relationship to Jesus, which is now extremely important to her. She enjoys the sense of community that belonging to a church gives her and finds meaning in volunteering on committees and church activities.

Another Jewish participant shared that she had been born in New York City and was also descended from Russian and Polish immigrants. As a child her Jewish school had showed them videos of the Holocaust to remind them of the Jewish experience, and this had been traumatic for her as a young child. She struggled to understand suffering and learned that it was important to fight against oppression. Her father helped her the most in her search for meaning, and she eventually got a graduate degree in Middle East Politics. It was difficult for her when she began to understand that the Jews had occupied Palestine and began to work for peace and understanding between the religions.

Another Muslim shared that her family had immigrated from Iran when she was a young child. She recalled that maintaining their culture while settling in a new country was important to her parents. This could be confusing because she was expected to fit in and do well in school, but to also maintain strict religious and cultural traditions. A Muslim professor in college helped her to understand how to be comfortable as an Iranian American. She began to find a path in Islam that was more meaningful to her and that encouraged her to find answers for herself. She developed a deeper interest in Islam after she graduated from college and made friends who helped her to feel more comfortable as a Muslim in the U.S.

Next, a Jew shared that he had been born in Brooklyn, NY and his grandparents were Lithuanian immigrants. He grew up in a community that was ninety percent Jewish, so his early experience was more cultural than religious. He felt more agnostic as a child, and not sure what he believed about God and religion. His Mother helped him the most to be comfortable with being Jewish, and to believe in his abilities and take advantage of opportunities to succeed in life. She also helped him develop deep values that were focused on community service and helping others. He eventually became an engineer

and when he married his wife helped him to become more involved in the Temple and to study the deeper aspects of Judaism, such as Mussar.

Then a Christian shared that she had been born in Oklahoma in a strict Christian community that she felt was oppressive to minorities, especially to the indigenous tribes in the area. The congregation promoted rugged individualism and was very family oriented but racist, which made her uncomfortable. Her Mom and the other women in her family were strong and successful women who valued education. They taught her that she could achieve whatever she wanted, and eventually she became a lawyer. Despite the limitations of her religion, she fell in love with God at an early age and only wanted to serve God. But she also wanted to learn more about divinity outside of church dogma and as she got older, she began studying other paths, such as Buddhism and meditation. One aspect of her early church experience was the love of music, which has stayed with her and she is still very active in her church choir.

The last person to share was a Muslim, who had also been born in Pakistan. Her early experience of Islam helped her develop a deep and abiding faith in Allah and trust that he would always be there for her and take care of all aspects of her life, even when things are difficult. As she got older and moved first to the U.K. and then to the U.S., she continued to study the Qur'an and deepen her Muslim practice and her faith in God. Her religion is the foundation of her life, but her family, especially her mother, helped her to balance this with being successful in life with a commitment to helping others. She is now engaged in several Muslim community charities and is politically involved in the Democratic party.

After everyone had shared, the participants were given the opportunity to ask others in the group questions or comment on anything that had been shared. Each question was answered very thoughtfully and with sincerity. The first question was from a Christian who asked the Muslims about their experience of moving from a Muslim country to the U.S. A Christian then asked a Muslim how their congregation engaged teenagers in religion and religious practice, and a Jew asked about the meaning of faith for the purposes of this study. A Jew and a Muslim both said they wanted to learn more about the other faiths and were struck by the similarities in the stories. They observed that they didn't really know that much about one another's faiths. A Christian asked a Jew about the different

types of Judaism (Reformed, Orthodox, etc.). I was asked about my experience of Judaism and Islam outside of what I had learned in my studies. It was a very rich conversation among all participants and went over by ten minutes by mutual consent. One of the topics included a discussion of the difference between religion, spirituality and spiritual intelligence, and I gave a brief overview stating I would provide more details in the next session.

Participant Demographics

The demographics of the group emerged during the discussion and mirrored the characteristics of Boulder and the three congregations. The Christians were Caucasian, originally from the Midwest, the Jews were from the east coast with immigrant backgrounds, and the Muslims had all come from predominantly Muslim countries. The educational level of the group was also high, with one PhD, a doctoral student, a lawyer, an engineer, and two with master's degrees. All the participants seemed more liberal with a strong sense of community service and were also what I termed "seekers," or looking for a deeper experience in their religion or answers to spiritual questions.

Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale domains

The five domains of the ISIS served as a framework to develop the SI training that is derived from collation of literature on promoting SI in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. As presented in Chapter Three, the exercises and training approaches that are common denominators in all three traditions and aligned with the five domains served as a guide in developing a training program to promote SI. Selected literature on methods to promote SI from the perspective of the three Abrahamic religions were compared to the domains of the ISIS and integrated into the five lessons.

Assessment of the training sessions

Participants were asked to provide feedback after each of the five training sessions with an online survey tool (Survey Planet). The survey was not compulsory and participants were asked to respond if they wanted to provide feedback or had suggestions. The results of the survey were used to improve the elements and content of the classes and were not tied to the ISIS scores or the final survey. The online survey tool with three questions and

a comment box was offered after each class. The survey selections included a five-point Likert Scale graded from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The survey included the following selections.

- 1) This session was well organized and gave me more insight on the _____ domain of spiritual intelligence.
- 2) I received resources to help me develop spiritual intelligence.
- 3) The information and exercises were relevant to all three faiths.
- 4) What suggestions or comments do you have for the presenter?

References on spiritual intelligence from the Abrahamic faiths

As described in Chapter Three, four principal references on SI were chosen from each tradition to develop a synthesis of SI exercises that can be correlated to the five domains of the ISIS. The criteria used to select the references included the presentation of a framework with constructs or themes of SI, along with practice or exercises to develop the qualities of SI. While each book is specific to their tradition, they also have concepts that may be relevant to those of other traditions. Some references specific to SI in Islam (Hussain, 2014) and Christianity (Brewer, 2008) were not selected because the exercises included religious practices that were specific to that tradition and would therefore not be relevant to the other faiths. The following four references were selected.

The reference for Judaism is *The Spiritual Practice of Good Actions* by Greg Marcus (2016). Two sources were selected to represent the development of SI in the Islamic tradition. The rationale for this is that the first source, *A Synthesis of Spiritual Intelligence Themes from Islamic and Western Philosophical Perspectives* by Hanefa, Sa'ari, and Siraj (2016), provide the Islamic concepts that correlate to the domains of SI, but only provide general practices for Muslims to promote SI. The second source for promoting Muslim spirituality is *Secrets of Divine Love* by A. Helwa (2020). The second text provides similar Muslim concepts as the first source, but also provides exercises to develop Muslim spirituality that are similar to the Jewish and Christian sources on SI.

The reference for Christianity is *Spiritual Intelligence: A New Way of Being* by Brian Draper (2009).

Five training modules to promote spiritual intelligence

The constructs or themes from these authors do not correlate exactly to the five domains of the ISIS, so an assessment or thematic analysis was used to select the portions of the information on SI traits and the exercises that most closely relate to goals and recommendations from the five domains. The domains are not discreet constructs, but flow into one another and the exercises often overlap or reinforce a previous lesson. Each lesson was designed to be about ninety minutes long, so not every subscale capability was addressed for each of the domains. Main themes or select subscale qualities that best match the descriptions provided in the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report (ISIR) were matched to the content covered by the selected authors from the three faiths. Participants had a copy of their own ISIR to refer to for a comprehensive list of subscale capabilities in each domain. Each lesson was sent to them in a PDF file the week prior to each class.

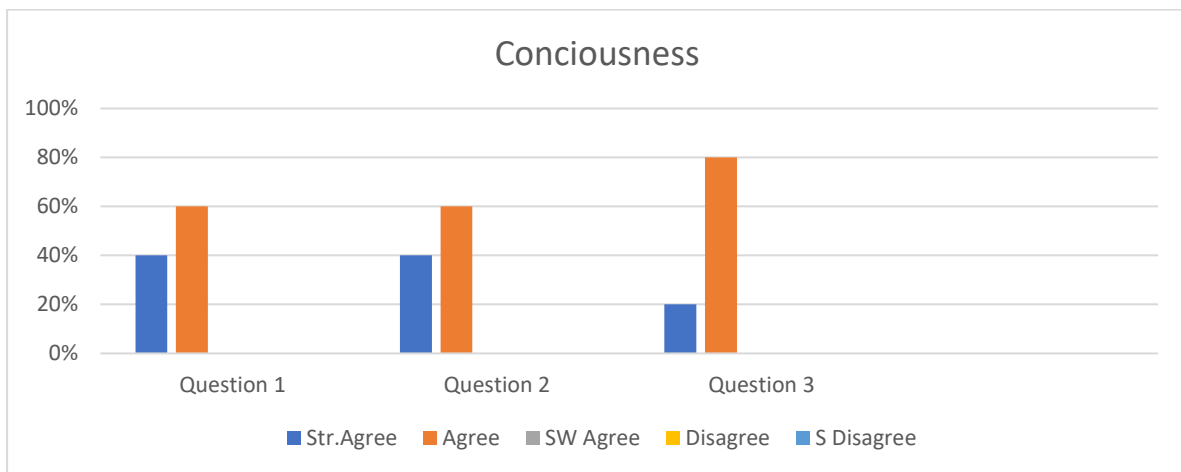
Module One: Consciousness

Amram state that the domain of consciousness includes “the development of refined awareness and self-knowledge, featuring intuitive trans-rational knowing, mindfulness, and spiritual practices, including subscale capacities for intuition, mindfulness, and synthesis” (Amram 2020:2). As planned after the previous session (first IFD), the class began with a brief discussion of the distinction between religion, spirituality, and spiritual intelligence that was previously presented in Chapter Two (21-24). Next, the information for this session was presented in a Power Point that provided a review of the class format, a summary of the ISIR and the limitations of self-reporting, a list of the five domains, the references from the three faiths used to develop the sessions, and the information on the domain of consciousness. The session included much information and there was little time for discussion among participants; however, there was a meditation at the end.

Survey results

Five participants responded to the survey.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This session was well organized and gave me more insight into the consciousness domain of spiritual intelligence.	40%	60%			
I received resources to help me develop spiritual intelligence.	40%	60%			
The information and exercises were relevant to all three faiths.	20%	80%			



What suggestions or comments do you have for the presenter?

- 1) If you send out the information ahead of time we can read it, so can you allow more time for discussion?
- 2) Allow equal time for each faith.
- 3) Maybe we do not need the slides. I'd be willing to read the lessons beforehand if we can have more time for discussion.
- 4) Good information, but it was a lot to absorb. It is going to take me time to understand all of this.

Module Two: Grace

As a result of the feedback from the survey on Module One, I opened the session by thanking those who had provided comments and explained that I would change the format of the sessions to include more discussion and would not use slides to present the information. Rather, I would summarize highlights of the key points from each domain and explain how the domain is used in each faith based on the literature. If they were interested in learning more, they could read the lesson that had been sent out the week before each class. After the information had been presented on SI in a specific faith, those of that faith would be invited to comment or add their experiences and observations.

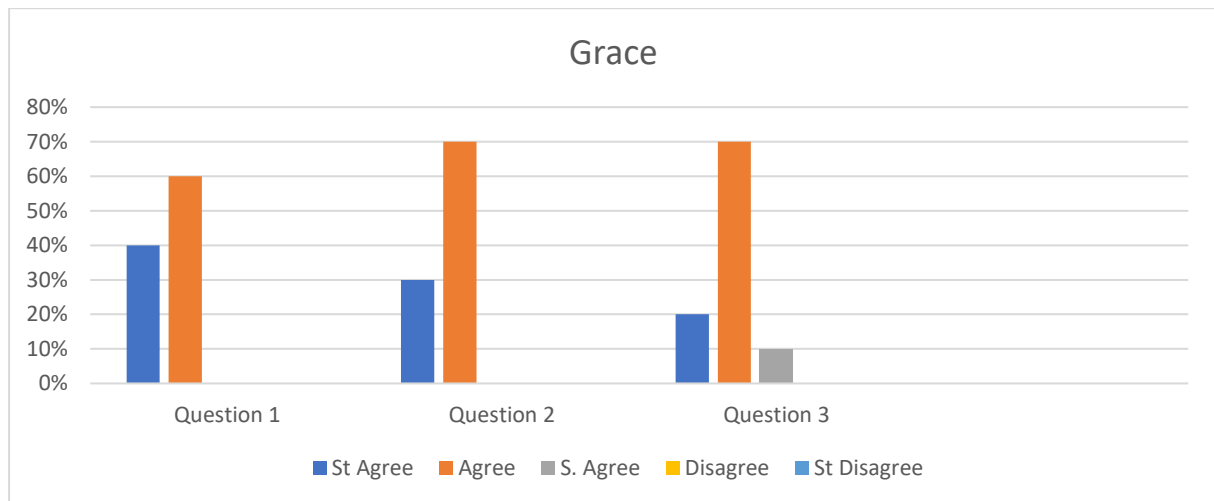
This session began with two discussion questions. The first was if each participant had a chance to look at their ISIR scores and what their impressions were, or if they had questions about their results. After each participant had answered, they were next asked if they had noticed anything different or started a new practice or done the homework exercises after the session the previous week. This produced more interaction and discussion among the members, and all had some positive change to report.

The domain of grace means living in alignment with the sacred, manifesting trust in and love for life that is based on gratitude, beauty, and joy, including subscale capacities of beauty, discernment, freedom, gratitude, immanence, and joy. The information on the domain of grace and the subscale capacities were presented, and those of each faith were then invited to comment on the information about the concept of grace in their faith. This again resulted in a deeper discussion of the topic and allowed those of different faiths to ask questions or make comments. An interesting topic of discussion was raised by the Christians who identified grace with the concept of original sin and the need for salvation, and the other two faiths had a different interpretation. The Jews and Muslims asked many clarifying questions of the Christians. The session again ended with a longer meditation.

Survey Results

Five participants responded to the survey.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Some-what Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This session was well organized and gave me more insight into the domain of grace in spiritual intelligence.	40%	60%			
I received resources to help me develop spiritual intelligence.	30%	70%			
The information and exercises were relevant to all three faiths.	20%	70%	10%		



What suggestions or comments do you have for the presenter?

- 1) I enjoyed this format better; it is nice to learn more about the other faiths and have more time to talk with each other.
- 2) It is interesting how much we all have in common, more than I realized.
- 3) Grace seems like a Christian concept and I am still thinking about how it applies to Judaism.

Module Three: Meaning

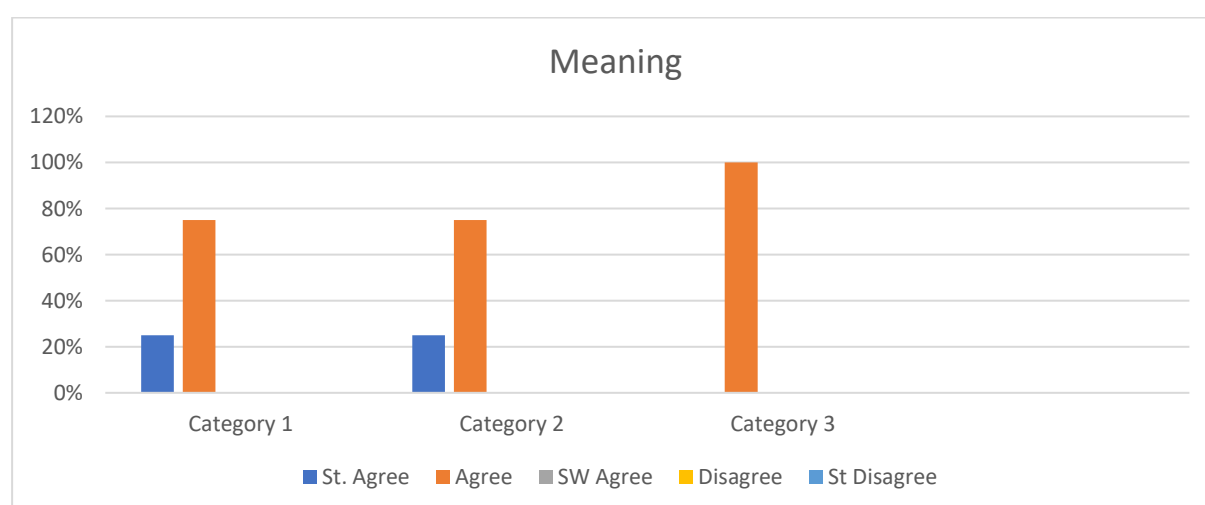
This session began with a discussion of their impressions of their SI scores in the domain of meaning, and whether they had added to their SI practice or had new insights after the session last week. Each participant had something positive to report. The domain of

meaning includes experiencing significance in daily activities through a sense of purpose and a call for service, even in challenging circumstances, including subscale capacities for purpose and service. The information on the domain of meaning and the subscale capacities were presented, and those of each faith were then invited to comment on the information about the concept of meaning in their faith. This again resulted in more depth of discussion and allowed those of different faiths to ask questions or make comments. An interesting topic of discussion focused on the Old Testament, the Jewish Bible and the Torah, and the same books found in the Qur'an. There was a discussion of how these are interpreted and used by each faith, and many found it interesting that we all use the same books and believe in the same prophets. The session again ended with a meditation collated from the SI sources from the three faiths.

Survey Results

Four participants responded to the survey.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Some-what Agree	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
This session was well organized and gave me more insight into the domain of grace in spiritual intelligence.	25%	75%			
I received resources to help me develop spiritual intelligence.	25%	75%			
The information and exercises were relevant to all three faiths.		100%			



What suggestions or comments do you have for the presenter?

- 1) It was good to have time for more discussion and especially learn more about Islam. It is more spiritual and different than I thought.
- 2) I look forward to our class and the meditation each week, it helps me calm down and be more peaceful, especially when things are hectic.

Module Four: Transcendence

This session began with a discussion of their impressions of their SI scores in the domain of transcendence, and whether they had added to their practices and/or had new insights after the session last week. Each participant expressed either a more in-depth practice or having more focus and awareness in their daily prayers (Muslims). Transcendence is going beyond the separate egoic self into an interconnected wholeness, including a holistic systems worldview and the nurturing of human relationships through empathy, compassion, loving-kindness, and I-Thou orientation, including subscale capacities for higher-self, holism, practice, relatedness, and sacredness.

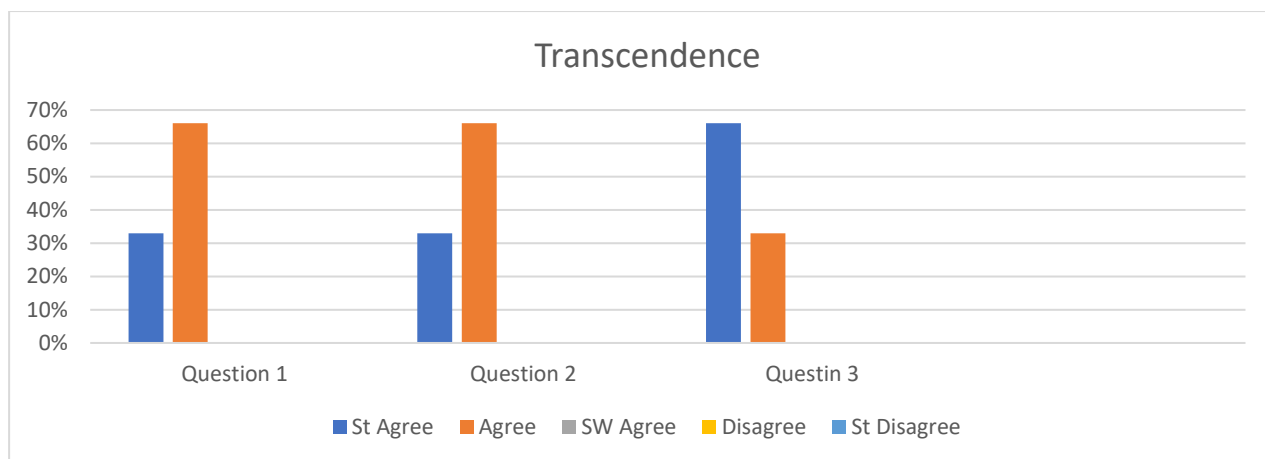
The information on the domain of transcendence and the subscale capacities were presented, and those of each faith were then invited to comment on the information about the concept of transcendence in their faith. This again resulted in more depth of discussion and allowed those of different faiths to ask questions or comment. An interesting topic of discussion was on the nature of God and the traditional view of a patriarchal judgemental God versus a compassionate and loving God, or if God was simply a creative force. The research from quantum science and spirituality was discussed and each faith commented from their perspective. One of the Jewish participants was especially moved by the meditation and the idea that she could experience a sense of transcendence that is not related to religion or God, but an experience of her inner higher being.

Survey results

Three participants responded to the survey.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Some-what Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This session was well organized and gave me more insight into the domain of transcendence in spiritual intelligence.	33%	66%			

I received resources to help me develop spiritual intelligence	33%	66%			
The information and exercises were relevant to all three faiths.	66%	33%			



What suggestions or comments do you have for the presenter?

- 1) Thank you for the meditations, I am starting to be more comfortable with them and look forward to doing them.
- 2) I am glad you sent the lessons ahead of time so we have time to think about it before class.

Module Five: Truth

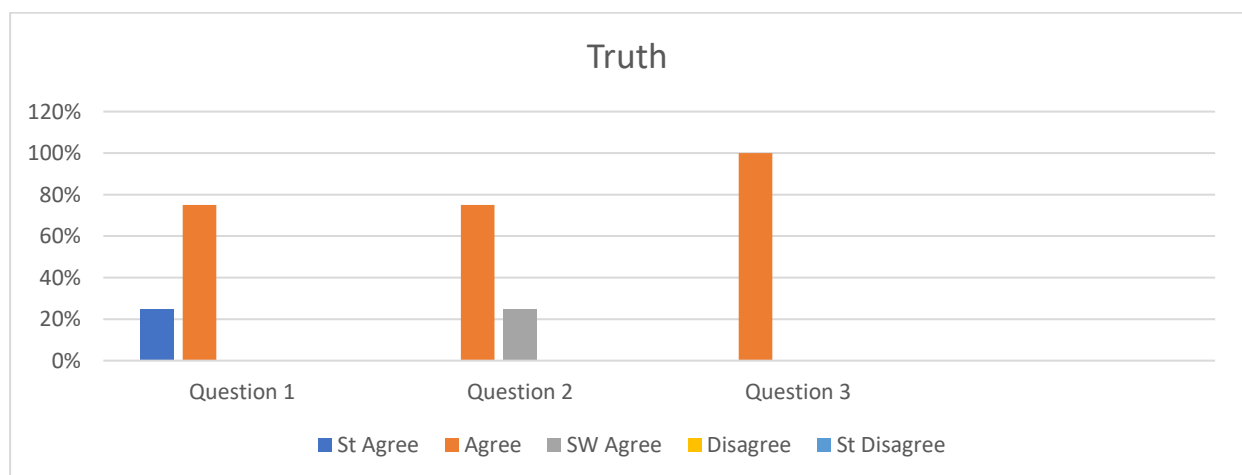
This session began with a brief meditation and then a discussion of their impressions of their SI scores in the domain of truth, and if they had added to their practices and/or had new insights after the session last week. Each participant was maturing in their daily practice and continued to have more focus and awareness about specific issues in their lives. To Amram, truth means “living in open acceptance, forgiveness, curiosity, and love for all that is (all creation), having respect for the wisdom of multiple spiritual traditions, and including subscales for egoless-ness, equanimity, inner wholeness, openness, presence, and trust” (Amram, 2020:12). The information on the domain of truth and the subscale capacities were presented, and those of each faith were then invited to comment on the information about the concept of truth in their faith. This again resulted in more depth of discussion and allowed those of different faiths to ask questions or to comment. An interesting topic of discussion was that there are the similar words that have the same

meaning in Arabic and Hebrew, such as “ruh” as the root of the word for spirit, which is ruhi in Arabic and ruach in Hebrew, or salaam and shalom for peace. Another topic of discussion was predestination versus individual choice in determining the course of our life, and if we can trust in God to guide us to find the truth? Can humans change and grow in our potential for compassion and service in the world without God? The premise of SI is that we can learn and evolve and choose a higher path regardless of our faith or beliefs. There was a meditation to complete the last class.

Survey Results

Four participants responded to the survey.

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Some-what Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
This session was well organized and gave me more insight into the domain of truth in spiritual intelligence.	25%	75%			
I received resources to help me develop spiritual intelligence.		75%	25%		
The information and exercises were relevant to all three faiths.		100%			



What suggestions do you have for the presenter?

- 1) Thanks, Debra, for another good conversation!
- 2) The exercise for truth seemed confusing. I sort of get it, but it seems we were leaning to trust ourselves, and not so much in God.

Post training Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale

After the five training sessions were completed, each participant was asked to take another ISIS and all of the participants submitted their second ISIR prior to the final interfaith dialogue the following week.

Second interfaith dialogue

The last session of the study was a follow up facilitated interfaith dialogue. Questions were developed for each of the five SI domains that had been sent out the week before the scheduled dialogue. The format of the discussion was for each participant to choose one question that they would like to pose to the group and discuss for five to seven minutes. The following is a list of the questions that they could choose from.

Questions for Interfaith Dialogue

Our final session will be an interfaith discussion that will be based on subscale capacities from the five domains of spiritual intelligence. Each participant will be given an opportunity to choose a question from the list below to pose to the rest of the group and discuss for five to seven minutes.

- 1. Consciousness:** “Development of refined awareness and self-knowledge, featuring intuitive trans-rational knowing, mindfulness, and spiritual practices, including subscale capacities for intuition, mindfulness, and synthesis” (Amram 2020: 2).
 - 1) Has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim shaped your ability to pay attention to the life emanating from all things in perfect order, and to express this flow in your daily life?
 - 2) Do you have a faith practice that allows you to find opportunities for inner awareness and appreciation of the present moment throughout the day?
 - 3) Does your faith help you to see another’s point of view, even those of other faiths or political beliefs? Has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim helped you to resolve conflict, especially with those that you do not agree?

2. **Grace:** Living in alignment with the sacred, manifesting trust in and love for life that is based on gratitude, beauty, and joy, including subscale capacities of beauty, discernment, freedom, gratitude, immanence, and joy.
- 1) Has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim shaped your ability to feel gratitude for your blessings?
 - 2) Can you describe a time when your faith has brought you joy?
 - 3) What experiences tend to bring you the most sense of beauty and immanence (something greater than ourselves)?
3. **Meaning:** Experiencing significance in daily activities through a sense of purpose and a call for service, even in the face of pain and suffering, including subscale capacities for purpose and service (Amram, 2020: 8).
- 1) Has your faith tradition helped you to recognize the talents you have been given and the work God calls you to do throughout your various jobs, school involvement, service activity, and club/organization memberships?
 - 2) In a world that encourages a consumer mentality of instant gratification and buying more “stuff,” has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim shaped your attitude toward developing a more meaningful lifestyle and increased appreciation of “things that matter” in life?
4. **Transcendence:** This means going beyond the separate egoic self into an interconnected wholeness, including a holistic systems worldview and the nurturing of human relationships through empathy, compassion, loving-kindness, and I-Thou orientation, including subscale capacities for sacredness, higher wisdom, practice, relatedness, and sacredness.
- 1) How does your faith tradition help you and other people to feel valued, respected, and included?
 - 2) What does your faith say about welcoming a stranger and attending to the needs of others? How has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim shaped your attitude

toward the treatment of the hungry, the homeless, the poor, the sick, or the imprisoned?

- 3) Does your faith help you find God or immanence even when experiencing suffering, pain, or struggle?
- 5. Truth:** Living in open acceptance, forgiveness, curiosity, and love for all that is (all creation), including respect for the wisdom of multiple spiritual traditions, and including subscales for egoless-ness, equanimity, inner wholeness, openness, presence, and trust (Amram, 2020:12).
- 1) Is there any topic about the other faiths that you are still curious about and would like to hear more about?
 - 2) Has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim shaped your attitude toward forgiveness, reconciliation, trust, and hope, even when you have been wronged or when you are the one who has wronged another person?
 - 3) Have you ever suffered or been criticized because of your faith? How did you manage it? Do you have faith traditions that ritualize healing or forgiveness? What does your faith tradition say about loving, blessing, or praying for your enemies?

Results of second interfaith dialogue.

1. The first question that was asked was about the views of each faith and the congregations on social justice. What does your faith say about welcoming a stranger and attending to the needs of others? How has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim shaped your attitude toward the treatment of the hungry, the homeless, the poor, the sick, or the imprisoned?

Members from each faith responded in turn that they were all as individuals and as congregations committed to social justice, and a few of the members had chosen careers that centred around social justice activities. Each congregation discussed their social or community programmes and discovered that they were working on several of the same topics but were not always aware of one another's activities. All

three congregations supported homeless programmes, promotion of education and literacy, and some refugee resettlement programmes. A member from ICB suggested that the social justice committees from each congregation could be in contact and meet at least quarterly to discuss their activities and possibly plan them together. The three congregations also stated that during the pandemic their community activities had lessened and each made a commitment to reach out and invite the other congregations to their events.

2. The second question was whether you needed religion to be spiritual or have spiritual intelligence? Has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim shaped your ability to pay attention to the life emanating from all things in perfect order, and to express this flow in your daily life?

There was an in-depth discussion about the spirituality of each faith, and spiritual movements outside of religion, such as the new science of spirituality and other paths such as Buddhism or other spiritual traditions. Members discussed their experience with other spiritual paths and particularly had an interest in indigenous practices. They agreed that their religions had helped them to develop their spirituality over time, but other experiences had helped them to be open and understand their faiths beyond the dogmatic and fundamental approach. They agreed that you could be spiritual without religion, but that their religion had helped them to become spiritual later in life, as they could build on their early training.

3. The next question was how your faith tradition has helped you and other people to feel valued, respected, and included.

Each member talked about the talents that had been nurtured because of their involvement in their religion. This included a love of music and singing, a sense of belonging and being a valued part of a community, a love of learning (such as learning more about the history of their religions or languages, such as Hebrew or Arabic). Most also felt that they had been encouraged with a work ethic to be successful in their careers and to build on their families' belief in service and doing a good job.

4. Has your faith tradition helped you to recognize the talents you have been given and the work God calls you to do throughout your various jobs, school involvement, service activity, and club/organization memberships?

Each participant talked about their volunteer activities, which were extensive. This included political involvement, assisting with veterans' programmes, working with the local library, volunteering at their congregations, assisting with fund-raisers and community outreach programmes, sponsoring recovery groups, homeless resettlement programmes, and many others. They all felt that their families and religions had encouraged them to be involved in their communities and they discussed the socially liberal nature of the three congregations.

5. The next question was, to what extent, in a world that encourages a consumer mentality of instant gratification and buying more "stuff," has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim shaped your attitude toward developing a more meaningful lifestyle and increased appreciation of "things that matter" in life.

Several participants had been encouraged to be materially and academically successful and felt this was important; however, as they matured, they became aware of a need for more inner awareness and began to study the deeper aspects of their faith. This led to a discussion of Mussar, Kabala, Sufiism, and the lack of a current similar esoteric tradition in Christianity, and a discussion of the history of the three religions.

6. Does your faith help you find God or immanence even when experiencing suffering, pain, or struggle?

Several members shared a time when they were experiencing a difficult situation like the loss of a loved one, a health issue, or difficulty with their children or family members. Some felt that religion did not explain why God allows suffering in the world, and one member said they had got mad at God for allowing her to lose a child. Others felt that their faith had definitely got them through difficult times and that they had learned to trust that God would watch over them and take care of their needs in the end. There was a discussion of what we learn or how we change after we go through something difficult, that we don't necessarily understand at the time.

7. Have you ever suffered or been criticized because of your faith? How did you manage it? Do you have faith traditions that ritualize healing or forgiveness? What does your faith tradition say about loving, blessing, or praying for your enemies?

This question included a discussion about times when they had experienced discrimination either because of their race or faith, such as antisemitism or islamophobia. Fortunately, there were not many instances, but the members had experienced them, especially the Muslims after 9/11. Most had been able to take a higher perspective and not feel deeply hurt. It made them uncomfortable though that the general public had little understanding of Islam and associated them with terrorists. A Jew had also experienced antisemitism when she attended a predominantly Christian school and been made to kneel and pray at assemblies or had not been included in several activities. This had left an inner mistrust of Christians that could still surface at times

8. Does your faith help you to see another's point of view, even those of other faiths or political beliefs? Has being Jewish/Christian/Muslim helped you to resolve conflict, especially with those with which you do not agree?

This included a discussion of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and one Jewish member's efforts to work on a political solution for Middle East peace. An observation was made that after participating in this study, they realized that they had much more in common than they realized and could see the potential to help promote a broader awareness of this. A Christian talked about her experience with white supremacists and the Christian Union in her community and how uncomfortable this made her. There was a discussion about the politics of race and religion and how it was an embarrassment to her that the religious right could be so judgmental. There were comments from the others that extremism in any faith can be difficult for the more moderate members of that religion.

9. Can you describe a time when your faith has brought you joy?

In this discussion members talked about positive experiences related to their faith that included the holidays such as Christmas, Hanukkah, and Eid that were centred around family celebrations with special food and often gifts. Others discussed

events such as weddings, baptisms, and Bar Mitzvahs, which celebrated the rites of passage. A few of the Jewish members had recently lost a dear friend and expressed their gratitude for the rituals around death and felt consolation to be part of the congregation that helped celebrate their friend's life and mourn her passing. One person shared a time when her faith had brought her a great deal of personal joy when feeling particularly close to God.

We closed the session by thanking each other for participating in the project and wishing everyone well for their continued journey of developing spiritual intelligence, learning more about the Abrahamic faiths, and working together.

Qualitative Survey

After the second interfaith dialogue participants were sent the qualitative survey of their opinion of the effect of the training in SI on their ability to interact with those of other faiths. The survey was sent via their coded e-mail and returned also with that e-mail address. Below is the survey that was sent.

Assessment of Value of Spiritual Intelligence Training in Interfaith Dialogue

This is the final assessment for the study of the value of Spiritual Intelligence (SI) training on promoting interfaith dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Based on your experience of participating in the five SI training classes, and then as a participant in the first and second facilitated interfaith dialogues, please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1. Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

Yes / No

- a. What was the most valuable part of the training for you?
- b. Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?
- c. Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?
- d. Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

2. **Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No**
 - a. Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?
 - b. Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.
 - c. During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?
 - d. Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project?
3. **Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?**
 - a. Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.
4. **Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?**

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback and assessment.

All the participants returned their surveys in the following week via return e-mail and a final e-mail was sent to each thanking them for their participation and support of the study, with best wishes for their continued development of SI and collaboration as an interfaith community.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter provided a review of the research method for the proposed model to promote spiritual intelligence (SI) in interfaith dialogue (IFD) in the Abrahamic religions, along with a description of the implementation of the method. The purpose of this research was to demonstrate that the spiritual strengths of the three faiths can be leveraged to promote SI, which can then be used to facilitate positive dialogue. Amram and Dryer define SI as “the ability to apply, manifest, and embody spiritual resources, values, and qualities to enhance daily functioning and wellbeing” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 1). The literature has

shown that SI contains the abilities that combine rational and emotional intelligence to reframe one's experience, transform the understanding of meaning, and then conceptualize a more moral and holistic outcome (Emmons, 1999: 3-5). Amram and Dryer (2008:2) also state SI can be developed with training and that the more spiritual wisdom one acquires will then allow them to develop a clearer and more authentic perspective of life with a blueprint to live accordingly.

The project was conducted virtually once a week, over an eight-week period in April and May of 2023. The sequence of the research included completion of the ethics procedures, an introductory module on the project, after which the participants took an initial Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS). The following week, they participated in an initial facilitated interfaith dialogue. The next five weeks consisted of sessions on the five domains of SI that were correlated with the literature from the three faiths, as described in Chapter Three. The last session was a second facilitated interfaith dialogue, after which the participants submitted a qualitative survey.

The community partners involved in this research included St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, the Har HaShem Jewish Congregation, and the Islamic Centre of Boulder, all located within a mile of one another on the same street in Boulder, Colorado. The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Survey (ISIS) developed by Amram and Dryer (2008: 1-8) was used as a pre- and post-assessment tool. The ISIS forty-five-item short form, self-report instrument contains twenty-two subscales assessing separate SI capabilities grouped into five domains (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 2). The exercises and training approaches that are common in all three traditions and aligned with the five domains of the ISIS were correlated to the qualities discussed in the literature on SI from the three faiths.

Swidler's (1983: 13-15) framework for IFD was used as a basis to design the format of the IFD in this study. The framework is based on first finding common ground that can then build to deeper stages of interaction. The intended result of the research is to provide a framework for training SI in multi-faith settings that may promote SI among the participants and lead to improved understanding and more positive interfaith interactions. Promoting an awareness of spiritual intelligence in the context of interfaith dialogue may also foster an awareness of the positive aspects of the three faiths and the sacred that is

held in common. Initial results of the study indicate that this model has value to improve interfaith dialogue and that the research design may serve as a model in other interfaith communities.

Chapter Five will present the results of the pre- and post-ISIR results that will be collated with the results of the qualitative survey. There will be a presentation of the conclusions that can be reached from the data and the findings of this study, along with the limitations and recommendations for future research. An overall summary of the study and the implications for Abrahamic interfaith dialogue will also be provided.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will present a review of the method for this study, the quantitative analysis of the pre- and post-Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) scores, and the qualitative results of the final subjective survey of the participants' opinion of the effect of the training on interfaith dialogue (IFD). The quantitative and qualitative results will then be collated to determine whether spiritual intelligence (SI) scores improved after participating in the five training classes, and whether this had a positive effect on the quality of the final facilitated dialogue. There will be a discussion of the findings and conclusions that can be reached from the data, along with the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research. An overall summary of the study and the implications for Abrahamic interfaith dialogue will also be provided. The intended outcome of the research is to provide a model for training SI in multi-faith settings, which may then have value for community interfaith dialogue.

5.2 Method

As previously described, a mixed method explanatory sequential design, employing both quantitative and qualitative data collection was used for this project (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 221-24). The purpose was to evaluate both the effectiveness of SI training measured through pre- and post-Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Survey (ISIS) scores, followed by an assessment of the participants' opinion of the value of the training on their ability to engage in meaningful interfaith dialogue. There was a three-phase data collection process in which the participant's Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Report (ISIR) scores were compared before and after the training to determine whether their SI improved. The second qualitative phase included a facilitated interfaith dialogue, which was evaluated by a questionnaire with a series of subjective questions. The overall intent of this design is to assess whether the quantitative set of results from the participants' ISIR scores and the qualitative assessment from the IFD questionnaire will demonstrate a positive relationship.

The expectation of the design is that these variables can be used in sequence of 1) introductory IFD, 2) baseline ISIS, 3) five SI training modules, 4) post ISIS, 5) final facilitated dialogue, 6) assessment of participants' opinion of the value of the training on the dialogue (*Figure 1*). This sequence is intended to demonstrate between training in SI and SI scores, followed by a correlation between improved SI to the subjective assessment of the value in interfaith dialogue. It is expected that following participation in the five training modules, that ISIS scores will statistically improve across the three faiths. It is also expected that this outcome will translate into a positive correlation between improved SI scores and subjective positive evaluation of structured IFD. The five domains of the ISIS served as a framework to develop an SI development training programme that is derived from collation of literature on promoting SI in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The training approaches and exercises that are common denominators in all three traditions and aligned with the five domains served as a guide in developing the training modules in the five SI domains.

Figure 1 Research Design



5.3 Quantitative assessment

The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS) developed by Amram and Dryer (2008) was used as a pre- and post-assessment tool. The ISIS forty-five-item short form, self-report instrument has shown satisfactory factor structure, internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and construct validity. It contains twenty-two subscales assessing separate SI capabilities grouped into five domains: “1) consciousness, 2) grace, 3) meaning, 4) transcendence, and 5) truth. The ISIS predicted satisfaction with life and correlated with existing measures of spirituality” (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 1- 2). As a review, the ISIS instructions ask participants to indicate the frequency of behaviours over the past six to twelve months using a six-point Likert Scale with the following labels: rarely or almost never; very infrequently; somewhat infrequently; somewhat often; very frequently; always or almost always. Participants were encouraged not to leave items blank and to use their best guess if they were unsure about a particular item. ISIS reverse scored items are recoded such that high scores on all items theoretically provided evidence for spiritual

intelligence. Cases with missing data are excluded from analysis when the missing data was required and included in analysis when the data was not required.

Quantitative Results

The following table (*Table 1*) is a summary of the participants' demographics and their pre- and post-ISIR scores in each domain. The participant's individualized codes are used to identify their scores, and pre-test scores are presented in the first line and post-test scores presented on the second line.

Table 1

Participant	Faith	Age	Gender	Scores	Conscious	Grace	Meaning	Transcen	Truth	Final SI Score
RA0324J	Jewish	73	Female	ISIR 1	4.0	4.8	4.0	5.0	4.5	4.5
				ISIR 2	4.7	5.3	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.8
GE1216J	Jewish	69	Female	ISIR 1	4.3	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.7
				ISIR 2	4.7	3.8	4.8	4.2	3.3	4.0
JO0427J	Jewish	48	Male	ISIR 1	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.3	3.5	4.6
				ISIR 2	5.0	4.9	5.2	4.5	3.8	4.9
LE0803M	Muslim	42	Female	ISIR 1	4.5	4.5	3.5	5.1	4.1	4.5
				ISIR 2	4.8	5.1	4.3	4.6	4.0	4.6
MI0209M	Muslim	38	Male	ISIR 1	3.2	3.3	3.0	3.6	2.9	3.2
				ISIR 2	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.9	4.3	4.5
RA0521M	Muslim	46	Female	ISIR 1	4.3	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.1
				ISIR 2	4.5	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.3
PA0918C	Christian	44	Female	ISIR 1	4.8	5.3	4.3	4.8	4.8	4.8
				ISIR 2	4.8	5.5	4.5	4.9	4.8	5.0
AN0124C	Christian	67	Female	ISIR 1	5.5	5.3	5.5	6.0	4.0	5.1
				ISIR 2	5.8	5.3	6.0	5.8	4.2	5.2
LE1018C	Christian	56	Female	ISIR 1	3.5	4.1	3.8	2.6	3.3	3.4
				ISIR 2	3.5	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.7

Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to report sample characters and outcome measures. Wilcoxon signed rank non-parametric analyses were conducted to compare pre and post-test scores on each domain. All data were analysed in SPSSv28.

Dependent Variables

A total of nine participants were included in the current study, with three Jewish, three Muslim, and three Christian. Of the nine participants, only two were males. Their age ranged from 38 to 73 with an average age of 53.67 years (see *Table 2*). Spiritual intelligence (SI) is composed of five domains of ‘consciousness, grace, meaning, transcendence, and truth’ (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 1). The SI total score was computed based on the mean scores of the five domains. The total score ranged from 3.2 to 5.1 at pre-test and from 3.7 to 5.2 at post-test.

Table 2

Variables	N	M	Median	SD	Min	Max
SI total score						
Pre	9	4.21	4.5	.65	3.2	5.1
Post	9	4.56	4.6	.49	3.7	5.2
Consciousness						
Pre	9	4.32	4.3	.70	3.2	5.5
Post	9	4.70	4.7	.60	3.5	5.8
Grace						
Pre	9	4.43	4.5	.69	3.3	5.3
Post	9	4.72	4.9	.64	3.8	5.5
Meaning						
Pre	9	4.06	3.8	.74	3.0	5.5
Post	9	4.67	4.5	.65	3.8	6.0
Transcendence						
Pre	9	4.32	4.3	1.02	2.6	6.0
Post	9	4.61	4.5	.56	3.8	5.8
Truth						
Pre	9	3.83	4.0	.62	2.9	4.8
Post	9	4.12	4.2	.53	3.3	4.8

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
	(<i>N</i>)	(<i>%</i>)				
Age	9	53.67	48.0	13.03	38.0	73.0
Gender						
Female	7	77.80				
Male	2	22.20				

5.3.2.2 SI scores and the five domain ISIR results

Overall SI scores significantly improved from pre to post-tests ($Z = 2.694$, $p = .007$). As shown in *Figure 2*, of the five domains significant improvements were found in the standard scores (Z) for consciousness ($Z = 2.375$, $p = .018$), meaning ($Z = 2.524$, $p = .012$), and truth ($Z = 2.217$, $p = .027$). Although grace and transcendence showed increased trends, they were not significant. (The p value is how likely it is to get the current sample if the null hypothesis is true.)

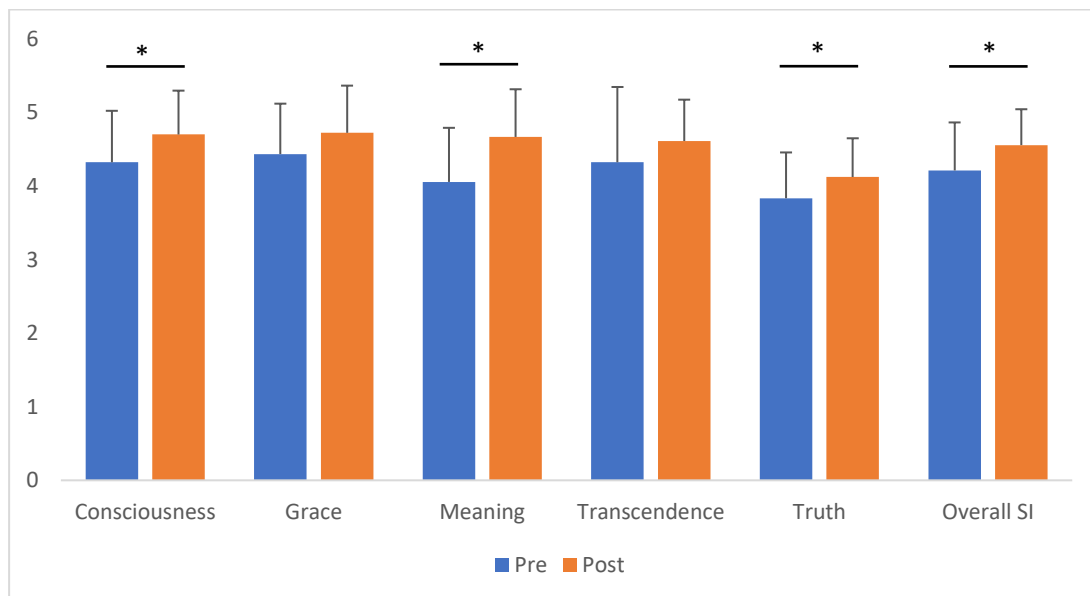


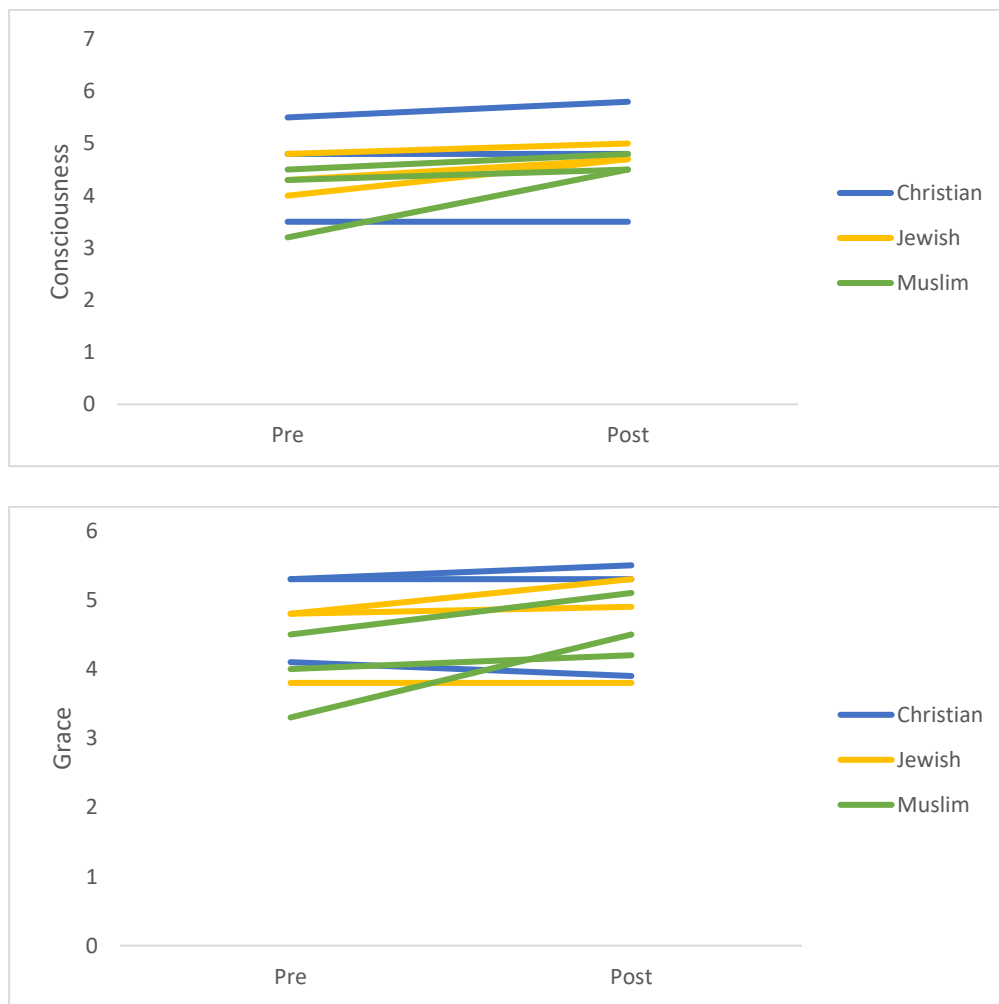
Figure 2 * Significant difference between pre and post scores.

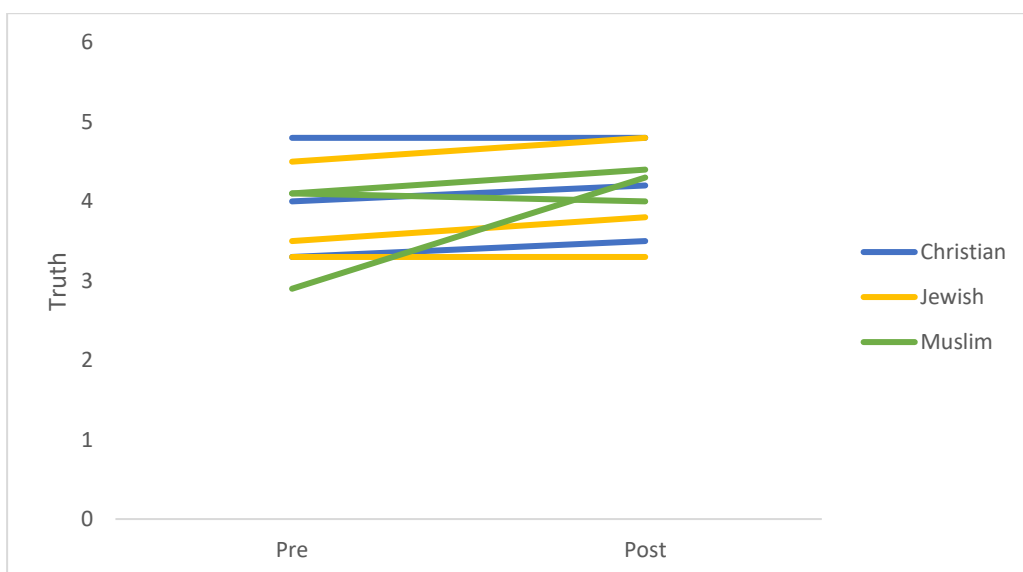
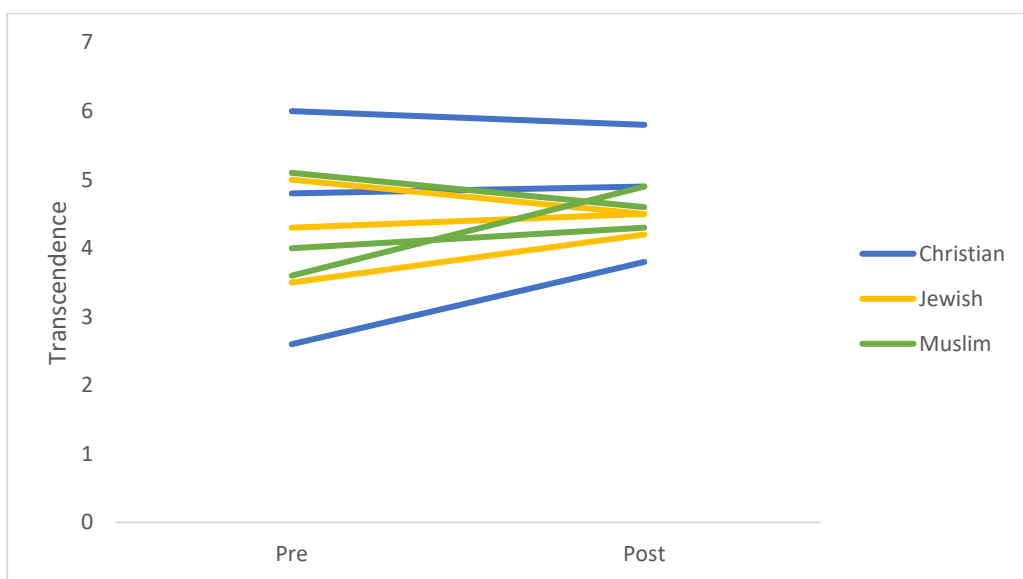
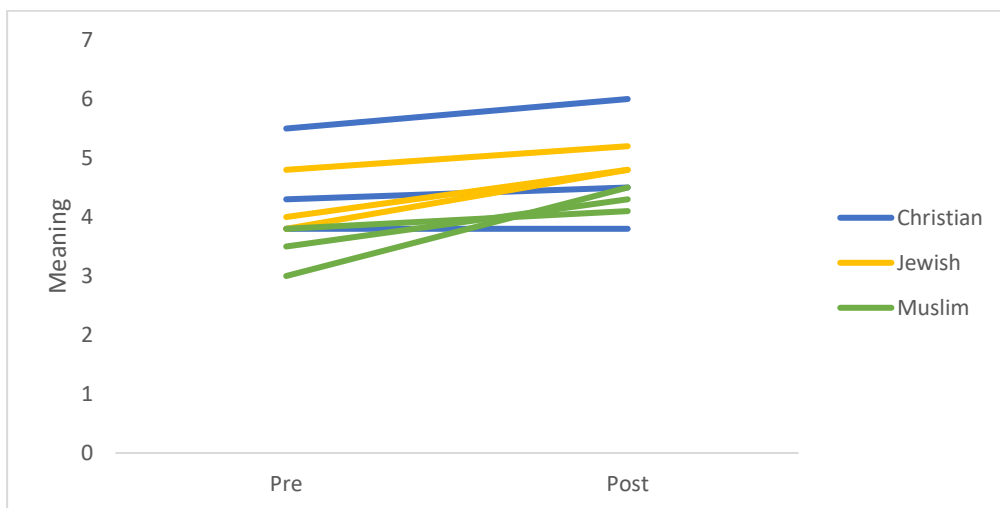
SI scores and the five domains compared by faith.

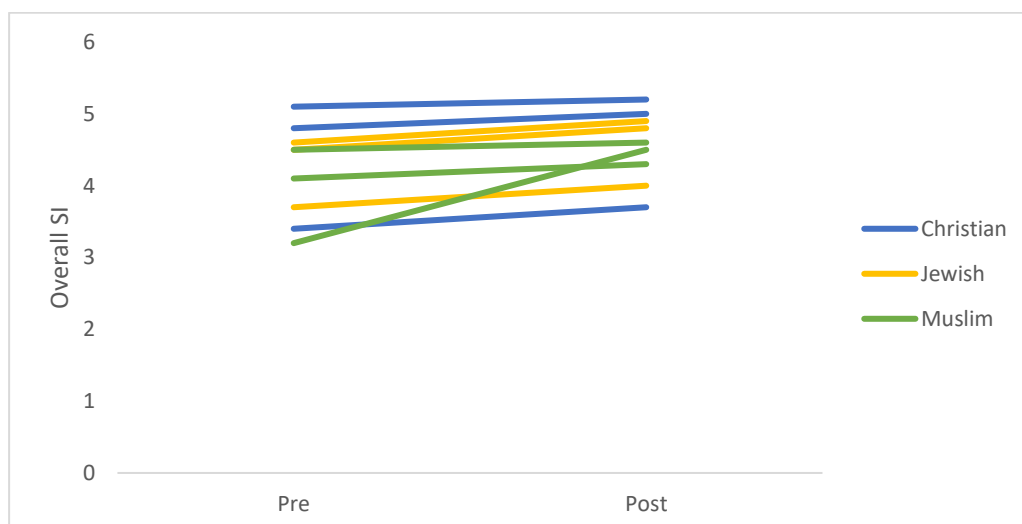
The outcome measures were then compared in each faith. Due to the very small sample size ($N = 3$ in each group), none of them showed statistical significance. Thus, the effect size (r) was reported to indicate the changes from pre- to post-test. The criterion for r is

as follows: .1 (small effect), .3 (moderate effect), and .5 (large effect). The results indicate that most domains, as well as the overall scores (r_s), were improved from pretest to post-test in every faith, except that there was no difference for the grace in Christians ($r = 0$) (Figure 3 a-f). Transcendence was improved after the training with moderate effect sizes ($r_s = .31$) in all three faiths. The overall spiritual intelligence, consciousness, meaning, and truth were also improved with large effect sizes (all $r_s > .5$) in all three faiths. Regarding grace, only Jewish and Muslim participants demonstrated increased grace with large effect sizes ($r = .77$ and $.93$, respectively). The following figures demonstrate the differences in the effect the training had in each of the domains by faith.

Figures 3 a-f







Figures 3 a-f. Individual lines from pre to post-test coloured by faith on a) Consciousness, b) Grace, c) Meaning, d) Transcendence, e) Truth, and f) Overall SI.

Christians had the highest average pre-test score ($r = 4.43$) and the lowest post-test gains ($r = 4.63$) for an average effect of .20. Muslims had the lowest average pre-test score ($r = 4.0$) and the highest post-test gains ($r = 4.6$) for an average gain of .46. The Jewish participants' scores fell between these with average pre-test scores of 4.26 and post-test scores of 4.56, with an average gain of .23. However, due to the small sample size in each faith this result cannot be considered representative of the three faiths, only the results for this cohort.

5.4 Qualitative survey results

After the second facilitated interfaith dialogue participants received a subjective survey of their opinion of the value of the SI training on interfaith dialogue among the three faiths. Surveys were sent and returned via their coded emails. The transcripts of the responses from the nine qualitative surveys are posted in Appendix D. Overall, the responses were positive with a few qualifying statements. As shown in *Table 3* below, all the participants felt that their spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five classes, and their post-ISIS scores support this outcome. Their opinion of the most valuable part of the project included themes of learning more about the other religions and their perspective on faith, especially how much the three faiths have in common. Eight participants said that they learned something about the other faiths that helped them to have a better understanding of the other religions, again mentioning the realization that there are many

commonalities. However, a Jewish participant was not sure what she had learned as she felt there was too much information to assimilate in the time allowed.

Two participants (Jewish and Muslim) said that they appreciated developing the SI trait of slowing down, being present, and feeling gratitude or appreciation for small things and blessings that may have been taken for granted in the past. A Muslim said that it was rewarding to discuss Islam with the other faiths and feel understood and respected. Other valuable resources included appreciation for the handouts that were sent out the week before each class with information on the SI domains, the SI perspective of each faith, and the exercises and meditations. Five participants stated that these were used during the project and will serve as a future reference. One Christian felt that the meditations during class had helped her to slow down and feel more peaceful during a stressful time. All the participants felt that the SI training complemented their religious values, and they did not experience any conflict in the content of the classes. However, a Jewish participant stated there were terms that were not meaningful or seemed to be more Christian, such as the words faith and grace. This perspective was brought up during the class discussions and addressed by the group.

All participants expressed that the SI training helped to prepare them to talk to those of other faiths, and that this was easier after the SI training. A Christian said that the format of the class was very safe and welcoming. Their experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue was a positive experience, as they had gotten to know one another better and felt it was easier to share on a personal level. Comments included that the second dialogue was more meaningful, deeper, and that they could discuss difficult topics. However, a Christian had disagreed with a perspective expressed by a Muslim that “God has a plan for everybody and will never give you more than you can handle”. This point was debated by the participants during the discussion, and while it was not comfortable for the Christian and no agreement was reached, it was a valuable discussion where each participant maintained their religious identity while discussing their differences on the nature of God.

Seven participants felt more compassion for those of other religions after participating in the project, and one Jewish participant expressed feeling more compassion for the individuals, but not necessarily for the religions. A Christian felt that compassion was

already one of her strengths and that it was not strengthened during the project. Seven members thought that the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help them to feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future. However, a Muslim said that she was very comfortable talking to the other religions before the project and this had not changed because of the SI training or the dialogues. She did say that the second dialogue was more interesting and meaningful. Six members also expressed that the first dialogue had been comfortable for them, so the word “comfortable” appears not to have been a good descriptor to use in the survey to get relevant information in support the outcomes of this study.

All the participants hoped to continue engaging with those of other faiths after the study, but only two had plans to do so. A Jewish and Muslim participant expressed a hope that the three congregations could work together more in the future. Three participants (two Jewish and one Muslim) appreciated that the class format had been changed after their class survey feedback, and that the Power Point presentation was dropped in favour of a discussion format. Other comments included further suggestions to improve the class, such as having summary statements of the key points for each class, providing break out groups for more personal discussions among the faiths, and a Christian suggested less time covering the information and more time for discussion. However, this person had read the handout material ahead of class, but not all the participants had done so. Two participants mentioned that there was too much information for the time that was allowed, and two mentioned that the Intelligensi website with the ISIS was not easy to use and they required additional help to navigate it. All the participants expressed appreciation for having participated in the project and for the other group members.

Below is a table summarizing the data from the participants' qualitative survey responses. Key questions are highlighted in bold font.

Table 3: Summary of Qualitative Data

Table Summarizing Qualitative Data				
Survey Question	Jews	Muslims	Christians	Percent/Notes
Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	100%
What was the most valuable part of the training for you?	• Meaning of SI • Being more present • SI scores and improving them	• Learning about other religions • Discussion of commonalities • Discuss Islam and feel accepted	• Learning about other religions • Learning other perspectives • Discussion / Meditations	
Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	100%
Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?	(N=3) no	(N=3) no	(N=3) no	100%
Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.	• Muslim reference for meditations • Slowing down/ appreciating small things. • Understanding Mussar	• Another step in Islamic studies • Slowing down/ appreciating blessings • Meditations/handouts	• Experience in talking to other religions. • Handouts • Understanding other faiths	
Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	100%

Table Summarizing Qualitative Data				
Survey Question	Jews	Muslims	Christians	Percent/Notes
Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	100%
Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.	(N=3) yes- positive	(N=3) yes- positive	(N=2) yes- positive (N=1) no- uncomfortable as disagreed with Muslim perspective.	88% positive (100% felt it was deeper or more meaningful)
During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?	(N=2) yes (N=1) not sure, there was too much information to digest.	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	88%
Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project?	(N=3) yes (N=1) has more compassion for individuals, vs. religions.	(N=3) yes	(N=2) yes (N=1) no, as already had compassion before training.	88%
Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?	(N=3) yes	(N=2) yes (N=1) no change as felt very comfortable in working with other religions before project.	(N=3) yes	88%

Table Summarizing Qualitative Data				
Survey Question	Jews	Muslims	Christians	Percent/Notes
Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	(N=3) yes	100% (N=7) expressed this as a future wish with no immediate plans.
Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?				See transcripts and discussion.

The next section will present the collation of the qualitative and quantitative data in the sequential mixed method design.

5.5 Correlation of quantitative and qualitative data

This project proposed to assess whether improving SI among members of the three faiths would promote effective community interfaith dialogue. A mixed methodology explanatory sequential design of both quantitative and qualitative data collection was used. All of the participants' ($N=9$) SI scores did improve after they had participated in the five training classes and the subjective survey indicates that each one felt that the training had a positive effect on interfaith dialogue. As noted, the word "comfortable" was used in a key question to assess the effectiveness of the training on interfaith dialogue and eight out of nine participants felt more comfortable, while one participant stated they felt very comfortable talking to the three faiths prior to the training, and this did not improve. However, she did note that the second dialogue was more interesting and had more meaning. Based on the improved SI scores for all participants and the positive subjective assessment of the benefit of the training on dialogue, there is a positive correlation between SI training, improved SI scores, and meaningful IFD in this study as shown below.

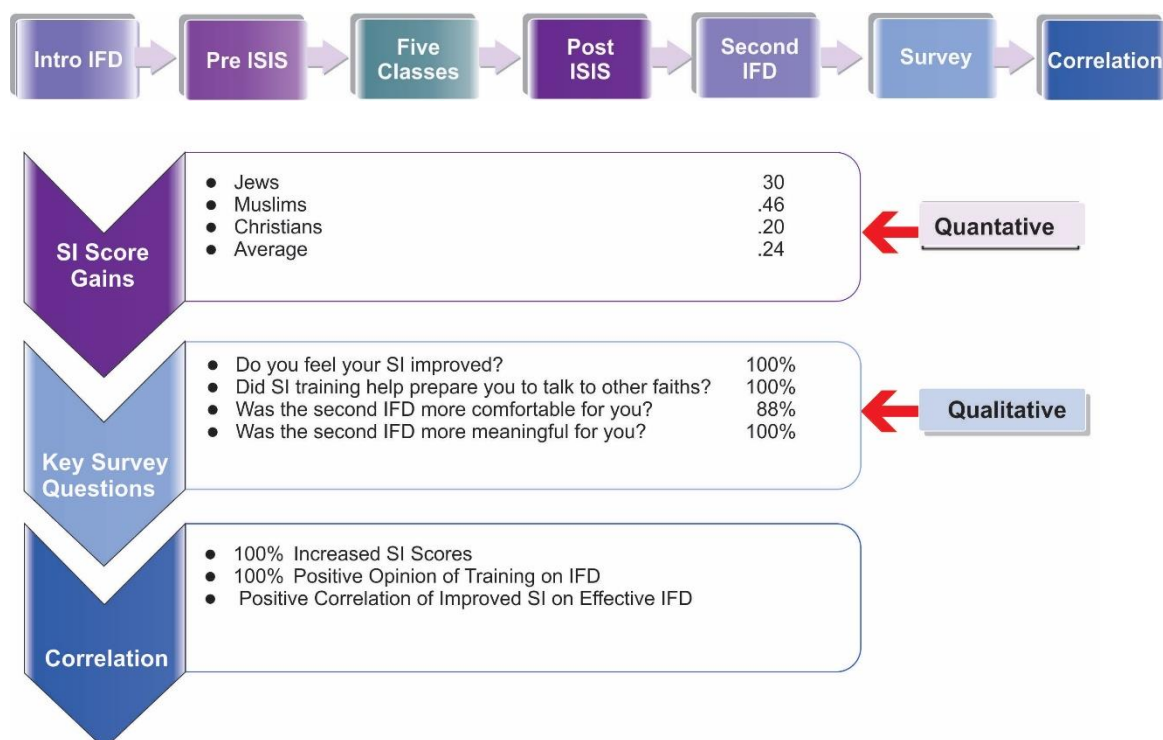


Figure 4

The final section will include a discussion of the findings that can be arrived at deriving from the data, along with the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research. An overall summary of the study and the implications for Abrahamic interfaith dialogue will also be provided.

5.6 Discussion

This project proposed to assess whether improving spiritual intelligence (SI) can promote effective community interfaith dialogue (IFD) among members of the three faiths. The problem that was addressed with this research was the lack of evidence in the literature of the causal relationship of SI and IFD in a community level effort, which may then provide results that can be extended to solve wider problems of religious intolerance. In the past, the two concepts of spiritual intelligence and interfaith dialogue had been studied as two separate constructs and only peripherally studied in relation to each other (Clark, Lin, & Maher, 2015). The goal to correlate the development of spiritual intelligence with training methods to promote effective community interfaith dialogue among Jewish, Muslim, and Christian congregations was met in this study. The quantitative and qualitative results are positively correlated and the constructs of SI and IFD have now been successfully studied in relation to one another.

The nine participants participated in five SI training classes based on Amram's domains, and all SI scores improved as a result. The total scores ranged from 3.2 to 5.1 at pre-test and from 3.7 to 5.2 at post-test. The results indicate that most domains, as well as the overall scores were improved from pre-test to post-test in every faith, except that there was no difference for the grace in the Christian faith ($r = 0$). Transcendence was improved after the training with moderate effect sizes ($r_s = .31$) in all three faiths. The overall spiritual intelligence, consciousness, meaning, and truth were also improved with large effect sizes (all $r_s > .5$) in all three faiths. Only Jewish and Muslim participants demonstrated increased grace with large effect sizes ($r = .77$ and $.93$, respectively). The ISIS results indicate that participants had developed more abilities of SI during the course of the training and therefore can be presumed to have successfully developed a framework for cultivating and using the skills and abilities of spirituality, as well as developing the unique capacities of each domain.

Interfaith dialogue (IFD) refers to cooperative, constructive, and positive interaction among people of different religious or faith traditions that promotes understanding and acceptance (Brown, 2013: 5). The participants participated in an initial facilitated IFD and following the five classes; they also participated in a second facilitated IFD. Over the course of the five classes, it was observed that participants generated increasingly meaningful dialogue among themselves, and their subjective evaluation indicates that they felt that their mutual understanding improved leading to more depth and meaning in the dialogues. However, the word “comfortable” appears to have been an ambiguous descriptor to use in the survey to obtain the information to support the outcomes of this study. Using descriptors such as “effective” or “more meaningful,” rather than “comfortable,” may have resulted in more accurate or useful responses to this key question. Seven members thought that the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help them to feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future, but a Muslim said that they were already very comfortable talking to other religions and this had not changed because of the SI training or dialogues. Six also expressed the view that the first dialogue had been comfortable for them. A Christian was also uncomfortable in the second IFD in a discussion about the nature of God presented by a Muslim. Though not comfortable, the dialogue had progressed to an advanced stage of Swidler’s framework, in that there was a deeper discussion of the nature of God that promoted mutual religious understanding, while maintaining their individual religious identity.

Swidler (1983: 15) proposes that there are progressive phases of IFD, beginning with first learning about one another that then can lead to discernment of the values, faith, or religious perspective of the participants. According to Swidler (1983: 15), the first dialogue begins with the goal of acknowledging commonalities and discovering shared values and experiences, which will then create a sense of cohesiveness. He states that the aim is to first develop cohesiveness within the members so that religious differences can be explored in the next phases in safety and respect. Swidler proposes that participating in the process of IFD can lead to discernment of the values, faith, or religious perspective of the participants, while the members can explore innovative ideas and meaning that mutually expands their world view (Swidler, 1983: 15). The discussions in the SI training sessions and the two interfaith dialogues of this research were conducted using Swidler’s

framework, and it was observed that the participants' understanding of one another's faith and religious self-understanding did proceed along the path described by Swidler as a result of participating in this study.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research is that spiritual intelligence can be assessed and developed in a community setting among the Abrahamic faiths, and this will enhance structured community interfaith dialogue. The objectives of this study were to develop and employ training methods aimed at improving SI scores based on pre- and post-ISIS scores, followed by structured IFD, and then a subjective survey to demonstrate the relationship between improved SI scores and perceived effective facilitated interfaith dialogue. The correlation of the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that the research objectives have been met. A training programme was developed resulting in improved SI scores indicating that SI can be developed among the three faiths. The training was also perceived to have a positive effect on IFD, so the conclusion can be made that there is a positive correlation between improved SI and perceived effective IFD for this community.

Research questions

The following research questions that were posed for this project have also been answered.

Question #1: Is there a relationship between SI and IFD in the Abrahamic religions?

- Based on the results of the post ISIS scores and the positive assessment of the effect of the training on IFD, it can be inferred that there is a relationship between improved SI and positive IFD in the Abrahamic religions in a community setting.

Question #2: Is there a correlation in the research for developing SI in the Abrahamic faiths that corresponds to the constructs of the five ISIS domains of consciousness, grace, meaning, transcendence, and truth, which can then be incorporated into SI training modules?

- Chapter three demonstrates that the research for developing SI in each of the Abrahamic faiths can be correlated to the five ISIS domains and successfully developed into an effective SI training program that was delivered over the course of this project.

Question #3: Can spiritual intelligence be developed or improved with this training in a community multi-faith setting among the Abrahamic faiths, based on pre- and post-ISIS scores?

- Following the five training classes, ISIS scores improved by an average of .24 across the three faiths and in most domains for the three faiths.

Question #4: Do participants who received the SI training perceive that training had a positive effect on a structured interfaith dialogue that may have wider application in the Abrahamic faiths?

- All the participants from the three faiths felt the training led to deeper and more meaningful dialogue. A relationship between improved ISIS scores and the perceived positive effect on IFD can be inferred from the results, however, there was no null hypothesis presented by participants, so it cannot be considered a definitive relationship. That means that there were no participants whose ISIS scores did not improve, and none of the participants felt that the training had a negative effect on the second structured IFD.
- Based on the results of the qualitative and quantitative results, it is possible that this model can have a wider application in the Abrahamic faiths but will require further study with larger cohorts and more diverse communities to validate the model for a wider application.

An additional potential outcome of this project may occur at the community level. The community partners involved in this research, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, the Har HaShem Jewish Congregation, and the Islamic Centre of Boulder, have now expressed an interest in working more collaboratively on community and social justice initiatives as a result of participating in this project. This equates to Swidler's "Dialogue of

the Hands”, which comes from increased understanding among the faiths that results in mutual benefit and joining together to make the world a better place to live. “The world in us and around us is in need of healing, and we can only heal our deepest wounds if we work together, which starts with productive dialogue” (Swidler, 2012: 10).

5.7 Limitations of the study

There were several limitations to this study. An overall limitation is the small cohort that participated from an exceptional community. The limiting of the study to nine participants would indicate that the outcomes cannot be considered statistically significant in some variables, such as with age and gender differences. Dependent variables that were analysed only included faith, age, and gender, and the last two proved to be statistically insignificant based on a small sample size (the age groups were close in range and there were only two males who participated). The ISIS was found to have reliability, internal consistency, and temporal stability across demographics of gender, age, and religion. Mean scores of ISIS studies showed that women and those of the older age ranges of both genders tended to score higher (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 23-24), so these analytics could be an addition to a larger study.

Boulder is also not a typical community in that it is one of the most educated cities in the U.S. with a high percentage of residents with bachelor's and graduate degrees. It is one of the more affluent cities in the country and was named the best place to live in the U.S. by *U.S. News and World Report* (2021). It is also considered one of the more socially and politically liberal U.S. cities. The characteristics of the three congregations and the participants of this study reflected these traits, so the results may be different if the study were to be conducted in a more typical community with wider political, social, and educational diversity. Ethnicity and culture were also not evaluated for the possible effect on developing SI or on IFD. The Christians were Caucasians from U.S. Midwestern states, Jewish participants were from large East Coast cities, and the Muslims were from predominantly Muslim countries. The culture and ethnicity of the members of the three faiths may have had an effect on the results of the study but were not evaluated. Therefore, the results can be considered positive for the nine members who participated in the study and can only be inferred from to have wider relevance.

5.8 Future research and recommendations

The results of this small study are encouraging but as mentioned, it will require larger cohorts to validate the effectiveness for other Abrahamic communities, or for application on a larger scale. Additional dependent variables can also be studied for the impact that these may have on developing SI and for promoting effective IFD, including culture and ethnicity. Amram and Dyer also found that age and gender had an impact on SI, so these could be meaningful variables to consider in a larger study. One participant also mentioned that the process of training in SI and IFD dialogue would be interesting if it included other faiths besides Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Since two participants felt that there was too much information to assimilate over the time of the study, ideally this project would be conducted over several months to give participants adequate time to read over the material, reflect on the information, and to do the exercises and meditations. Potentially this could lead to greater gains in SI scores, and possibly lead to more effective dialogue. The suggestions from participants aimed at improving the class format could also be incorporated, such as summarizing key points and take away information for each session, provide breakout groups among the three faiths to promote more personal interactions, and provide more detailed instructions for using the Intelligensi website and taking the ISIS.

5.9 Thesis summary

The goal to correlate the development of spiritual intelligence with training methods in the context of community interfaith dialogue among Jewish, Muslim, and Christian congregations was met in this study. The constructs of SI and IFD have now been successfully studied in relation to one another. Magonet (2004), the editor of a collection of essays on promoting understanding among Jews with Christians and Muslims, describes attributes that are critical to promote interfaith understanding. “The qualities of spiritual altruism from across the faiths must be developed to acknowledge, understand, and respect each other’s dignity and humanity...when we neglect the spirit of human solidarity in the shared heritage of our faiths, we abandon our most sacred space...” (Magonet, 2004: ix). Magonet seems to be describing the need to develop SI in the three faiths. Zohar and Marshall interpreted SI as the intelligence of our highest motivations in a positive ethical spectrum. They indicate that qualities such as wisdom, compassion,

integrity, and joy can lead to a deeper sense of meaning and purpose with improved adaptation and success in many areas of life. As a result of participating in this study, participants had the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the other faiths and cultivate respect for each other's dignity and humanity. This could also result in improved adaptation and success in other areas of their lives and considered an additional benefit of improving their SI. The abilities of SI include, among other qualities, the reluctance to cause unnecessary harm (Zohar & Marshall, 2000: 24), which is an essential first step toward leveraging the values of religion to develop interreligious understanding and cooperation (Cornille, 2008: 11), so the results of this study may also have implications for improving religious intolerance.

To Swidler (1983: 14-16) the purpose of interfaith dialogue is to develop the skills of deep listening and a willingness to personally change, so all partners can learn and grow from one another's perspective. The attributes of altruism and respect for our shared humanity in relationship to the Divine promotes effective IFD and can be compared to the abilities of SI that promote an understanding of the sacredness of life and our shared humanity (Emmons, 2000: 22). Several participants in this study noted that they now have an increased understanding of the other faiths and how much we have in common, which seems to have led to an increased respect for our shared traditions among the group. Participants also noted feeling more compassion for the other faiths after participating in the project. SI promotes the conscious pursuit of spiritual and psychological health, not only for individuals, but for the sake of the global community, and includes the capacity to extend care and concern for the wellbeing of others including family, community, and other ethnic or cultural groups (Vaughn, 2002: 16). The members of the three congregations have now expressed an interest in working more closely together on community issues, so this was also a positive outcome of the study.

Emmons (1999: 12) writes that the components of spiritual intelligence are inherent in most cultures around the world. Several researchers (Emmons, 2000; Amram & Dryer, 2008; Wigglesworth, 2013; Mark, 2015) have found that practice or training may help develop some of these abilities in both secular and religious settings. Practice and training also help to develop more effective IFD (Swidler, 1970: 32; Kratz-Mays, 2008: 6). Building upon the spiritual strengths of the three faiths to develop a training course to promote SI, which builds upon the positive religious values of each faith, may be valuable in promoting

interfaith dialogue and interreligious understanding. From the synthesis of the IFD and SI literature and the results of this study, it follows that SI and IFD can both be strategically developed to support and leverage the success and effectiveness of each construct in a process of mutually reinforcing abilities. Improved SI may promote more effective IFD, and interfaith understating may help to develop SI. Models of interfaith dialogue incorporate the principles of faith among the Abrahamic religions, where it is not enough to know doctrinal and cultural differences, it is also important to learn to communicate in a constructive manner with one another. “Interfaith dialogue is not a theological or political problem, but an organic communication process that produces interfaith meaning” (Brown, 2013: ix). Participants in this study did learn to communicate with one another in a constructive manner on key issues, such as the nature of God and our responsibility toward those of other faiths.

Literature on SI from the three faiths support internalizing this inner wisdom to shift to a more positive and moral inner self. This can occur regardless of the tradition and sacred texts that this process is derived from. The Abrahamic traditions foster a trust in God that provides inner strength, along with the capacity to cultivate an awareness of the spiritual aspects of life. This is based on the multireligious belief that God is present in daily life and provides a source of strength and guidance that is a constant across religions and cultures. Amram (2007: 24-25) proposes that there is not one unifying cosmology across spiritual traditions, but that most spiritual traditions develop a set of qualities that are adaptive and increase functioning and wellbeing. The capacity to align with the sacred is universally adaptive, which he equates with spiritual intelligence (Amram & Dryer, 2008: 24).

“Interreligious and interideological understanding is absolutely necessary in our contemporary and complex world. We will not achieve our potential for a full human life without learning to practice authentic dialogue” (Swidler 2012: 19). The results of this study provide hope that the qualities of SI can be developed, nurtured, and promote positive dialogue in a community interfaith setting, thus providing another resource to help us reach our full human potential and create a more just and peaceful world.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale

Appendix B Table of sources for developing SI in the Abrahamic religions.

Appendix C NWU Informed Consent to participate in study.

Appendix D Nine transcripts of qualitative survey results

APPENDIX A:

THE INTEGRATED SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE SCALE

Follow the instructions provided to create a random code that will be used to confidentially identify your profile. _____

Year of birth_____

Gender: M or F _____

Indicate your religious affiliation? _____

On the next few pages, please score all the items on a scale from 1 to 6 based on the general frequency of your behaviour over the past 6 to 12 months. You are encouraged not to leave items blank and use your best guess if you are unsure about a particular item.

- 1 - Never or almost never
- 2 - Very infrequently
- 3 - Somewhat infrequently
- 4 - Somewhat frequently
- 5 - Very frequently
- 6 - Always or almost always

Answer	#	Question
	1.	I get upset when things don't go the way I want them to go.
	2.	In my daily life, I am disconnected from nature.
	3.	In difficult moments, I tap into and draw on a storehouse of stories, quotes, teachings, or other forms of time-proven wisdom.
	4.	I don't know how to just be myself in interactions with others.
	5.	I have a daily spiritual practice-such as meditation or prayer-that I draw on to address life challenges.
	6.	I am driven and ruled by fears.
	7.	I tend to think about the future or the past without attending to the present moment.
	8.	My life is a gift, and I try to make the most of each moment.
	9.	I draw on my compassion in my encounters with others.
	10.	My actions are aligned with my values.
	11.	In meetings or conversations, I pause several times to step back, observe, and re-assess the situation.
	12.	I have a hard time going against conventions, expectations, or rules.
	13.	Even when things are upsetting and chaotic around me, I remain centered and peaceful inside.
	14.	In my day-to-day tasks, I pay attention to that which cannot be put into words, such as indescribable sensual or spiritual experiences
	15.	I am aware of a wise- or higher-self in me that I listen to for guidance.
	16.	I can hold as true and integrate seemingly conflicting or contradictory points of view.

Answer	#	Question
	17.	I strive for the integration or wholeness of all things
	18.	My work is in alignment with my greater purpose.
	19.	I derive meaning from the pain and suffering in my life.
	20.	Because I follow convention, I am not as successful as I could be.
	21.	Being right is important to me.
	22.	I notice and appreciate the sensuality and beauty of my daily life.
	23.	I enhance my effectiveness through my connections and receptivity to others.
	24.	Even in the midst of conflict, I look for and find connection and common ground
	25.	I listen to my gut feeling or intuition in making important choices
	26.	I listen deeply to both what is being said and what is not being said.
	27.	I am mindful of my body's five senses during my daily tasks.
	28.	I look for and try to discover my blind spots.
	29.	I live in harmony with a force greater than myself-a universal life force, the divine, or nature-to act spontaneously and effortlessly.
	30.	My goals and purpose extend beyond the material world.
	31.	I hold resentment towards those who have wronged me
	32.	I find ways to express my true self creatively.
	33.	To gain insights in daily problems, I take a wide view or holistic perspective.
	34.	I have daily and weekly times set aside for self-reflection and rejuvenation.

Answer	#	Question
	35.	I remember to feel grateful for the abundance of positive things in my life.
	36.	I have faith and confidence that things will work out for the best.
	37.	In my daily life, I feel my work is in service to the larger whole.
	38.	I see advancing my career as the main reason to do a good job.
	39.	My mind wanders away from what I am doing
	40.	Even when I seem to have very few choices, I feel free.
	41.	I want to be treated as special.
	42.	I have a hard time standing firm in my inner truth-what I know inside to be true
	43.	I bring a feeling of joy to my activities.
	44.	I strongly resist experiences that I find unpleasant.
	45	I am my own worst enemy.

APPENDIX B:

TABLE OF SOURCES FOR DEVELOPING SI IN THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS.

The following is a crosswalk of sources for promoting spiritual intelligence in the Abrahamic Faiths, which will be integrated with the five domains of the SIS to develop five modules to promote SI.

	Spiritual Intelligence in Multifaith Perspective
Source	Training Technique/Purpose
Buzan, T., 2001, <i>The Power of Spiritual Intelligence.</i>	Information and exercises based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: 1. Big picture - Develop universal/ cosmic perspective 2. Exploring values - Awareness of and enhancement of positive values 3. Life vision and purpose - Transform life for a greater purpose 4. Charity and gratitude - Become more nurturing, gentle and kind. 5. Power of ritual - Develop routine spiritual practices.
Wolman, R., 2001, <i>Thinking with Your Soul: Spiritual Intelligence and Why it Matters.</i>	Information and activities based on results of PSI: 1. Divinity - Seek deeper meaning in everyday activities and see the divine in others. 2. Mindfulness - Attention in present moment; conscious living; awareness of wellbeing of body, mind and spirit. 3. Intuition - Develop awareness beyond the five senses. 4. Community - Seek those who support spiritual/ psychological wellbeing; care and concern for others; work for greater good. 5. Intellect - Develop knowledge of SI; thoughts, understanding, dialogue in relation to questions of ultimate concerns.

Wiggelsworth, 2012, <i>21 Skills of SQ</i> .	Information and exercises in the following four quadrants and 21 skills, reflecting Maslow's Hierarchy: 1. Self-knowledge - Awareness of worldview, life purpose, inner values and thoughts; awareness of ego/higher self. 2. Universal awareness - Awareness of interconnectedness of life; awareness of limitations; awareness of spiritual laws; experience transcendence. 3. Self-mastery - Commitment to spiritual growth; living to higher purpose and values; maintaining faith; seeking guidance from higher source. 4. Social mastery and spiritual presence- Compassionate, wise and healing presence; aligned with the ebb and flow of life.
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Spiritual Intelligence in Christian Perspective	
Source	Training Technique/Purpose
Draper, B., 2009, <i>Spiritual Intelligence- A New Way of Being</i> .	Information and exercises based on the life of Jesus as an example of SI. 1. Awakening - Develop power of awareness in each moment. 2. Living the change - Live all aspects of life as a person of faith-with love and compassion. 3. Passing it on - Be generative in your community; develop caring and concern for others. 4. Overcome ego and false self - Know yourself as a child of God, awareness of own inner value and spiritual gifts.
Brewer, M., 2008, <i>What is your SQ?</i>	Instructions based on four Christian sentinels of SI from a Presbyterian Pastor. 1. Scripture - Continuously ask what God says in scripture, open your heart to interpret it, and apply it in every situation. 2. Reason - Assess if your thinking/actions are reasonable, and not driven by emotion or desire; strive to be in alignment with God's word (i.e., make moral choices). 3. Wise friends - Develop close, honest friendships to nurture one another on God's path; spiritually supportive community. 4. Inner voice of the Holy Spirit - Spend time in contemplation and prayer; learn to discern God's word; practise spiritual wisdom and be led by that inner spirit.

Mark, C., 2015, <i>Spiritual Intelligence & the Neuroplastic Brain.</i>	Information, meditations, and spiritual practices to develop SI and balance hemispheres of the brain. 1. Awakening - Become acutely aware and experience inner spiritual nature; born again in the spirit as Christ transforms our carnal nature. 2. Balance - Transcendent with worldly; solitude/prayer with community; work with worship, etc. 3. Care and compassion - Feel the presence of the Divine that guides our behaviour toward alleviating hatred and suffering in the world. 4. Devotional living - Taking time each day to read scripture, silently appreciate nature, etc. 5. Empathic living - Nurture relationships, resolve conflicts; access one's own feelings and re-align towards positive behaviour towards others. 6. Forgive self and others - Learn to transmute judgment of self and others into to love and acceptance. 7. Gratitude - Living and staying connected to source; develop wholeness and integration. 8. Meditation and solitude - Routine practice for self-directed relaxing of body, mind, and spirit; regularly connect with transcendent God.
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Spiritual Intelligence in Muslim Perspective	
Source	Training Technique/Purpose
Hussain, M., 2014, <i>7 Steps to Spiritual Intelligence in Islam.</i>	Interpretation of the Quran and Islamic teaching to promote SI." SI is the knowledge through which one attains Divine nearness, purification of the self, ridding of moral vices, and developing strong character. It starts with knowledge, followed with constant moral action, and results in obtaining Divine proximity" (page 5). Exercises, reflections on scripture and meditations in four quadrants of SI practice: 1. Genuine desire to be close to God. 2. Mentoring by spiritual director; right company. 3. Learning and understanding SI. 4. Remembering God/praying to God. 5. Striving to practise God's teaching. 6. Simplicity and contentment.

	7. Self-inspection and self-control.
Esmaili, Hamid, & Golverdi, 2014, <i>Spiritual Intelligence and Guides to Promote it.</i>	SI in Islam refers to those who have realized the nature of Divine truth and passed through the challenges and illusions of life to align with the nature of God (p. 171). The authors recommend spiritual exercise and daily actions to promote SI including. 1. Achieving unity beyond apparent diversity. 2. Correction of false intellectual patterns, then adjusting behaviour to align with God's will. 3. Daily exercises, prayer, meditation, with contemplation of creation, and the nature of God. 4. Striving for a life of virtue and piety. 5. Fasting, worshipping, reading the Quran. 6. Teaching and practising compassion, kindness, integrity, and reliance on spirit.
Hanefa, Sa'ari, & Siraj, 2016, <i>A Synthesis of Spiritual Intelligence Themes in Islamic and Western Perspectives.</i>	The authors provide information and practices to promote SI in Islam, that are correlated to instructions in the Quran including. 1. Become aware of self with higher consciousness and live purposefully with clear and refined awareness of relationship to God, knowledge of heart and soul. 2. Develop the intellectual power to understand the secrets of different learning; study to understand the meaning and purpose of life; we are vice-regents of God; attain knowledge of God's will, wisdom, and compassion. 3. Act in accordance with the responsibility we have to God; do good deeds and avoid bad deeds; good conduct. 4. Transcendence - Orienting inner awareness and experience to the Divine realm and be aware of this interconnectedness to man's attributes and potentials; we are a spark of God that gives us our human potential. 5. Reach ultimate inner peace and assume calmness by removing all evil attributes. Connect with the heart and absorb knowledge of God and the spiritual world.

Spiritual Intelligence in Jewish Perspective	
Source	Training Technique/Purpose
Morinis, A. 2014, <i>With Heart in Mind: Mussar Teachings to Transform Your Life.</i>	Spiritual practice for developing a strong and open heart—drawn from Judaism's Mussar tradition. The central concern of Judaism is that we accomplish a personal spiritual transformation in our lifetimes. When we realize that the process of transformation is situated at the centre of our lives, then all circumstances that we live with are re-visioned as pathways for our growth. Provides exercises in developing Mussar traits including, the steps of attentive listening, understanding the heart, humility, joy, serving the sages, closeness to others, purity, slow to anger, good heartedness, loving God and being beloved, judging others favourably, and other qualities that corresponds to abilities of SI.
Jaffe, D. 2016, <i>Changing the world from the inside out; a Jewish approach to personal and social change.</i>	Integrates the Jewish inner spiritual path with positive social change, using deep Jewish spiritual wisdom to build a more just and peaceful world. Provides a programme of exercises in deep self-awareness, cultivating caring for others, and the world, inner awareness, motivation to seek spirit, traits like trust, slow to anger humility, patience, created in divine image- dignity and honour. Provides a study guide, and a facilitator's guide in the programme.
Marcus, G. 2016, <i>The spiritual practice of good actions.</i>	Provides an evaluation and exercises in the following soul traits; humility, patience, trust, loving kindness, honour, gratitude, equanimity, and calmness). Mussar is a means to internalize Jewish values to develop a more ethical, meaningful, and authentic life. It is experiential learning with a focus on conducting ourselves according to the spirit of the teaching. Mussar is also the Hebrew word for measure and the question

	is not if we have a particular soul trait, but how much of the trait do we have?
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APPENDIX C:

**NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT FOR
PARTICIPATION IN A STUDY TO PROMOTE SPIRITUAL
INTELLIGENCE IN COMMUNITY INTERFAITH DIALOGUE**

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: Promoting spiritual intelligence in community interfaith dialogue in the Abrahamic religions.

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Hennie Goede

POST-GRADUATE STUDENT: Debra L. Scott

CONTACT: debrapono@gmail.com

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my Doctoral Dissertation. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee (NWU 00879-22-A6)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

- Religion is a significant contributing factor to community level violence and acts of intolerance, which seem to be increasing among the Abrahamic faiths.

Interfaith initiatives seek to enhance religious tolerance and promote peaceful coexistence, while spiritual intelligence (SI) programmes seek to increase the capacity to align with the sacred and apply spiritual resources to solve specific problems. You are invited to participate in a research project to demonstrate that the spiritual strengths of the three faiths can be engaged in order to promote SI, which will then foster positive dialogue.

- This study will be conducted through St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Boulder, CO and will be done by an experienced researcher trained as a Certified Spiritual Intelligence Coach, and who has a master's degree in organizational psychology. About 9-12 participants will be included in this study.

Why have you been invited to participate?

- You have been invited to be part of this research because you are a member of either the Jewish, Christian, or Muslim faith.
- You will unfortunately not be able to take part in this research if you do not self-identify as either Jewish, Muslim or Christian, as the focus of the study is on the Abrahamic faiths.

What will be expected of you?

- You will be expected to take a 42-question test called "The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale" (ISIS) before and after you participate in five training classes aimed at promoting Spiritual Intelligence in members of the three faiths. The purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of SI training. This will be followed by a facilitated interfaith dialogue, and a survey of your opinion of the value of the SI training on speaking with those of other faiths. You are asked to participate in five weekly sessions.

Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?

- The gains for you if you take part in this study include receiving training in SI based on the values of the three Abrahamic faiths, and you may then have a more positive experience of interfaith interactions. Participants may foster an individual inner capacity for compassion and altruism, which may improve mutual understanding and cooperation among religions.
- The other gains of the study may be that these cultivated abilities of SI can then be applied in support of positive community interfaith interactions, thus diminishing negative outcomes, such as violence and act of intolerance based on religion. This research may also provide tools for other community congregations to promote SI and interfaith dialogue.

Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

- 1) The risks to you in this study include that there may be a psychological response to receiving a spiritual intelligence score that is different than participants may have anticipated. However, it is important that you understand that the purpose of the ISIS score is to provide a profile of your key spiritual key strengths, with areas for opportunities for growth. The instrument relies on self-report data and is not an absolute measure of intelligence and does not indicate that one is more or less spiritually capable. It is intended to provide guidance in areas that one may wish to work on or learn more about. The ISIS provides a relative score in each competency, with recommendations on how to apply the competency, and methods to further develop SI abilities, which will also be offered to participants.
- 2) There may be a possibility of an interfaith conflict or misunderstanding developing during the facilitated interfaith dialogues. Studies in promoting SI in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths will be used to develop an integrated training programme that has been correlated with the five domains of the ISIS, with five corresponding training modules for the participants. This will be followed by a facilitated interfaith discussion, based on first developing mutual understanding as a basis to move into more advanced levels of dialogue and community engagement. Research has shown that the model used in this project promotes positive interfaith understanding, not dissent.
 - This is considered a low-risk study and there are more gains for you in joining this study than there are risks.

How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

- Anonymity of your findings will be protected and your privacy will be respected by the researcher (Debra Scott). Your results will be kept confidential by Debra Scott, who will be the only researcher who will be able to look at your results.
- Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and electronic data will be password protected. Data will be stored only until this dissertation has been approved by the university, then shredded or electronically deleted.
- To maintain confidentiality, privacy, and strict anonymity, no identifying information will be collected from participants, who will be asked to generate a code based on 1) the first two letters of their middle name, 2) four-digit day and month of their birth. This individualized code can be used to locate a personalized profile for the questionnaires/assessment tools to be evaluated and compared, without any reference to individual information.

What will happen with the findings or samples?

- The findings of this study will only be reported as a summary of results from all the participants' responses, not individually, in my doctoral thesis, and just for this one study. They will not be used for future studies and will be deleted or shredded after my thesis has been accepted. Results will be stored on a code-locked computer accessible only to me, or stored in a locked file in my office.

How will you know about the results of this research?

- I will give you the results of this research when it has been approved by the university, either in paper format or via e-mail if you request this.
- You will be informed of any new relevant findings via e-mail if you provide it.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

- There are no monetary benefits to taking part in this study and there will be no costs involved for you if you decide to participate.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Debra Scott at e-mail at debrapono@gmail.com if you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the North-West University Education, Management and Economic Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering and Natural Sciences Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Marlize Bischoff at 018 299 4707 or marlize.bisschoff@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study titled, **Promoting Spiritual Intelligence in Community Interfaith Dialogue among the Abrahamic Faiths.**

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language in which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurized to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher

I (*name*) declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to the volunteer participant.
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.

or I was available should he/she want to ask any further questions.

- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.

- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2023

Signature of researcher

APPENDIX D:

NINE QUALITATIVE SURVEY RESPONSES

Qualitative Survey Response #1

Participant: RA0324J Jewish
Pre ISIS- 3.7; Post ISIS- 4.0

Responses

Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

Yes

What was the most valuable part of the training for you?

What SI means, what are the building blocks, how do I build on them. I find that I am "playing around" with the language in my head and trying to see where it matches what I understood and how to use the new information.

Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?

Yes, if anything, it confirmed the values I gained from my parents and my participation in Judaic studies and practices.

Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?

I wouldn't say that it conflicted, more that I realized there were terms that didn't mean anything to me.... or were loaded with what I thought was "Christian language." "Faith and Grace" are examples.

Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

I definitely want to find the book you quoted by the Islamic woman writer. That looked fascinating and I think will give me more insight into what spirituality means to me. Some of the language you used in the meditation was useful to me in my own mediation.

Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No

Definitely. Especially learning more about the Islamic faith. I feel I now have some basis for asking questions and having conversations with people who practice Islam.

Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?

It was very easy and comfortable. We had gained familiarity with one another and were less guarded. More comfortable speaking on a deeper level about what was true for us or to ask questions.

.Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.

The first discussion was comfortable, but we talked about more "loaded" topics in the second discussion and it was easier to share difficult experiences by that time. We had bonded with one another.

During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?

Absolutely.... especially the Islamic faith. I also carry some biases against those who may appear "sanctimonious" in their Christianity from the middle and high school I attended which, though "non-sectarian," was very New Testament oriented and in lots of ways antisemitic. So, listening to the lawyer speak about her experience growing up in Christianity and where her sense of spirituality is now very informative and interesting to me.

Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project

I don't know. I feel more interest in the ways people from different religions grow and question within their own denominations or outside the denominations in which they were raised. The compassion was more for the individuals rather than the religions.

Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future? Yes. absolutely.

Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not. Yes, but I'm not sure how. I have no plans.

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study? I'm glad I participated. I'm glad to have all the material you gave us, and you having compared the aspects of spirituality to the character traits in Judaism was helpful to me since I have taken two classes in that. I'm grateful that you altered your teaching style from reading the notes to speaking with us and encouraging dialogue.in the moment.

Qualitative Survey Response #2

Participant: GE1216J- Jewish
Pre ISIS- 3.7; Post ISIS- 4.0

Responses

Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

YES

What was the most valuable part of the training for you?

Really just reminding me of so many valuable things I've learned about slowing down and being more connected, appreciating life in the moment.

Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?

YES

Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?

Never

Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

Making time to slow down and really notice the world. While being outside with my dog I really looked deeply ... at new growth in the garden, at the sky.
 YES

Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No

Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?

It was more interesting, as we had more understanding of each other.

.Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.

Debra made it very comfortable to talk to one another on a personal level.

During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you. to have a better understanding of the other religions?

Not sure. There were so many topics covered that it was hard to retain information.

Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project.

I had a lot of compassion before, so this just supported it.

Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?

I have many friends who are Muslim and Christian and have had many rich conversations on faith/spirituality, so I hope to continue that.

Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.

I hope our congregations can work together more.

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?

I wish there was more of an essence of each session as in the one thing I could take away. There was so much information that it felt overwhelming and made it hard for me to retain a lot. I also wish there were breakout rooms for one-to-one conversations with someone from another faith tradition with a specific prompt. I think I would have gotten to know people better that way. I really appreciated how you pivoted from the slides after participant feedback. That was super helpful. I did feel comfortable in the class and all the participants were really lovely.

Good luck with the project and thanks for the opportunity to participate.

Qualitative Survey Response #3

Participant: JO0427J Jewish
Pre ISIS- 4.6; Post ISIS- 4.9

Responses

Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

Yes

What was the most valuable part of the training for you?

It was helpful to check my own scores before class, and then think about how I could improve as we went over each topic; it made it personal. I also enjoyed the discussions and talking about such meaningful topics among the faiths.

Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?

Yes, very much.

Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?

No. It supported them.

Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

This helped me understand Mussar better and how I can use the exercises in practical ways.

Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No

Yes

Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?

Yes. In the first discussion we were just getting to know each other, and after the classes we had more of an understanding of one another.

Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.

It was very comfortable and quite interesting. It would have been good to have had more time.

During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?

Yes, mostly what we have in common. We are all dealing with the meaning of our faith and how to live our values.

Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project

I felt compassion for some of the experiences that others had.

Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?

Yes, I wasn't uncomfortable before, but now I feel I have more understanding.

Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.

I hope so, but I don't have any plans right now.

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?

I didn't always have time to do the reading and exercises, as it was a lot of information. Thank you for putting this project together. It is a great idea and I wish you all the best with your dissertation.

Qualitative Survey Response #4

Participant: LE0803M Muslim
Pre ISIS- 4.5; Post ISIS- 4.6

Responses

Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

Yes

What was the most valuable part of the training for you?

Learning how others perceive spirituality and religion.

Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?

Yes, but it would have been good to use more well-known Islamic scholars as your sources. I was not familiar with the authors you used.

Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?

No, it did not, but SI in my view is just another way of looking at belief/religion or no religion without a specific label.

Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

This was another step in my Islamic studies/ spiritual growth, and I will continue to grow with studying Islamic scholars in the future.

Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No

I think it helped in talking with those in the group, but I was comfortable talking to those of other religions before the class.

Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?

I have always enjoyed talking to those of other faiths, (or no faith), but I have more information now.

.Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.

It was more interesting and I enjoyed it, but I was comfortable in the first discussion.

During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?

I enjoyed talking about the different beliefs and the experiences that the others have had and sharing openly. Open discussion brings to light how much all the Abrahamic faiths have. In common.

Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project

I feel compassion for people in general. Religions have never played a factor on my level of compassion for others.

Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?

The classes and discussions were helpful, but I have always felt comfortable with how people choose to believe, or not believe. Faith is personal, and how we take or not take the journey is our personal choice, there is no compulsion in faith. No one has the right to judge. .

Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.

I will continue to work in my community on the projects that my Islamic Center supports.

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?

I enjoyed the exercises. I would like to thank you Debra for giving me the chance to participate. Best always, I hope our paths cross again.

Qualitative Survey Response #5

Participant: MI0209M Muslim
Pre ISIS-3.2; Post ISIS- 4.5

Responses

Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

Yes, definitely.

What was the most valuable part of the training for you?

Interacting with those of other faiths and finding common ground.

Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?

Yes

Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?

Not really

Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

It helped me to disconnect from everyday tasks for a few minutes. This can be a helpful practice to regain composure/focus. Also, I learned to appreciate life and the many blessings around me which I normally take for granted.

Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No

Yes. This was a good experience of talking to those of other faiths.

Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?

Yes, in the first discussion I wasn't sure what to expect, but by the end we were comfortable talking to each other.

.Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.

Yes, it was positive. We had a chance to talk about deeper subjects.

During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?

I found out that there exist many common themes between the 3 faiths.

Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project

Yes, we are all dealing with many of the same things.

Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?

Yes

Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.

Yes, I do. There are a lot of common topics we can talk about and this engagement can benefit the community in the long run. I hope there can be united efforts on many fronts.

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?

Thanks for the excellent sessions. Switching from the PowerPoint mode to the discussion-type setting really worked. I enjoyed all the activities.

Qualitative Survey Response #6

Participant: RA0512M Muslim
Pre ISIS- 4.1; Post ISIS- 4.3

Responses

Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

Yes, I didn't know what spiritual intelligence was before this.

What was the most valuable part of the training for you?

Being able to explain more about Islam to the group and feeling that they understood and respected what was said. I wish there were more opportunities for this type of discussion.

Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?

Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?

Yes, the lesson gave me a chance to think more deeply about Islam. I liked the exercise from the book by Halwa.

Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

No.

The meditations will be helpful and deepen my prayer time. I appreciate the handouts as they will be a good reference in the future.

Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No

Yes, I didn't really have much experience before, so this was helpful.

Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?

Yes, the discussion got deeper and more interesting as we went along.

.Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.

It was very positive and safe to talk about meaningful topics.

During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?

Yes, I learned a lot about the other faiths that I didn't know before.

Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project

Yes.

Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?

Yes, as I said I didn't have much experience before, but now I feel I can talk to other faiths with more confidence,

Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.

I would like to but am not sure in what way. Maybe our centers can work together more.

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?

As you know, the assessment website was not easy for me to navigate so needed extra help. Otherwise, I really enjoyed the sessions, thank you so much for this experience and I wish you well in your studies.

Qualitative Survey Response #7

Participant: PA0918C Christian Pre ISIS- 4.8; Post ISIS- 5.9

Responses

Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

Yes

What was the most valuable part of the training for you?

Hearing the perspectives of other people of faith.

Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?

Yes! Personally, I wouldn't have minded going outside of Abrahamic faiths, either — but that's because I don't think God would condemn anybody because of their faith (or lack of it).

Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?

I think this experience I've had conversing with people of other faiths will help me in my journey to talk to folks of ALL religions.

Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No

Absolutely

Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?

Yes, the conversations became more personal.

Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.

During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?

The conversation was more meaningful, but I disagreed with some of the topics. The notion that "God has a plan for everybody" and "God will never give you more than you can handle", as the Muslim's claimed really bothered me. How can it be God's plan for you to lose a child and how can this be for the best?

Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project

I learned how much we've all got in common!

Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?

Yes, very much so.

Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.

Yes, I've already taken steps to start doing interfaith work. I'm looking forward to helping people of all faiths!

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?

Absolutely. I have contacted some interfaith organizations already.

The SI testing website was not intuitive and too difficult to use on my platform. I could have used more instructions on how to use it, and then I wouldn't have had to bother you so much for help. Otherwise, this was a good experience, Thank you for all your efforts and best wishes.

Qualitative Survey Response #8

Participant: AN0124C Christian Responses Pre ISIS- 5.1; Post ISIS-5.2

Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

Yes

What was the most valuable part of the training for you?

The discussion among the participants and learning more about the other faiths.

Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?

Yes

Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?

No

Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

The handout materials will be useful as a reference, especially the exercises from the other faiths

Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No

Yes, somewhat. I feel I still have much to learn.

Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?

I was comfortable during the first discussion, but the topics were deeper in the second one.

.Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.

It was very positive as we knew each other better after the classes. I was comfortable in all the discussions.

During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?

Yes, but not because of their religions. It was a reminder that many people struggle with their perception of spirituality and a higher power.

Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project?

I feel more interest in the other faiths now and hope I understand them better.

Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?

Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?

Yes, because I learned more about the other faiths.

I would like to continue engaging with others but not sure in what manner or venue.

I would have liked more discussion among us. I read the lesson in advance every week so listening to you go over them was not as helpful as the discussions were for me.

Thank you for putting so much time and thought into the class. It was helpful taking the assessment twice and learning about my "opportunities." I'm looking forward to the results from your study.

Qualitative Survey Response #9

Participant: LE1018C
Pre ISIS- 3.4; Post ISIS- 3.7

Responses

Do you feel that your spiritual intelligence improved over the course of the five SI trainings?

Yes, I learned about SI for the first time.

What was the most valuable part of the training for you?

Listening to the perspectives of others in the group and learning about the other faiths. I also enjoyed the meditations.

Did you experience that the SI training complemented your religious values?

Yes

Did you ever feel that the SI training conflicted with your religious values?

No, never.

Describe any spiritual resources that you gained from the SI training that will be helpful in your everyday life.

I have a much greater understanding of how people of other spiritual backgrounds view their faith and its role in their life.

Do you think that the spiritual intelligence training helped to prepare you to talk to those of other faiths? Yes/ No

I feel that I am now more open/aware of how similar I am to people of other faiths.

Do you feel that it was easier to talk to those of other faiths after the SI training, compared to the first interfaith discussion?

Somewhat easier because the format of the class was very safe and welcoming.

Was your experience of talking to members of the other Abrahamic faiths during the second facilitated dialogue a positive experience, or was it uncomfortable? Please explain.

Very comfortable. Again, the realization that we are more alike than I realized before the class.

During the facilitated discussion, did you learn something about the other faiths that helped you to have a better understanding of the other religions?

Yes, it was mentioned during discussions that the guilt/shame, which is sometimes a focus of Christianity, was less of an issue in other faiths.

Do you feel more compassion for those of other religions after participating in this project

One of my strengths, I believe, is my ability to be a compassionate person to most others, so I don't think this has changed.

Do you think the combination of the SI training and the facilitated interfaith dialogue will help you feel more comfortable talking and working with those of other faiths in the future?

Yes, this class will be helpful if I work with other faiths in the future.

Do you plan to continue engaging with those of other faiths after this study is completed? Please explain why or why not.

Yes, if opportunities present themselves in the future.

Do you have any other questions, concerns, or comments that you would like to share about participating in the study?

I looked forward to the meditations each week, as it helped me to slow down and relax during a stressful time in my life. I also enjoyed connecting with the others, it was a good group and thank you for putting this together. I hope things go well with your Ph.D.