

**An Investigation of the Interaction among Faith, Spirituality, and Awe in a
Synagogue Setting**

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Dedication and Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to Brent C. Harris, my son, for his love and support over the years that has meant so much to me.

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Needs Statement

Need

The study of *Mussar Middot*, personal traits or values which are sometimes called “Soul traits”, has been an important vehicle for Jewish self-examination about how to fulfill the commandment to be holy from the Torah: Leviticus 19:2 “Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy?”

From time to time as the Stamford’s Temple Sinai *Mussar* study group discussed the *Middot* of Morinis’ *Mussar* text, it was acknowledged that some members of the study group would raise the issues of faith, spirituality, and experience of God. However, the structure of these study sessions: meditative introduction, preliminary group discussion to the *Middot* text under study, (learning in pairs) *havruta* session discussion related text, and summary group concluding thoughts all had been done within an hour and consequently greatly limited any discussion beyond the immediate *Middot* under study.

The purpose of this workshop will be to examine the issues of faith, spirituality, and experience of God with greater depth than has been afforded the group previously and to provide any others in the congregation interested in these topics an opportunity to examine them on their own. This workshop will look at the *Middot* of Faith from Alan Morinis’ book, *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar*, to provide a context for individual and collective examination of the relationship between faith, spirituality and the experience of God. For the purpose of this workshop the

experience of God will be viewed mostly within the context of Awe experiences. The study of faith in contemporary psychology will also be discussed. The hope is that our discussions will allow participants to look at their own belief(s) or lack thereof and to affirm what has meaning for them and to know better what directs their actions in life.

The hypotheses investigated in this study are:

H1: It is expected that the overall attitude toward spirituality of participants in this workshop will change positively as measured by the spirituality scale (See Appendix B).

H2: It is expected that the overall attitude toward engagement with God by participants in the workshop will change positively as measured by the items in the God engagement scale (See Appendix B).

Relevance to my ministry

This workshop is a direct outgrowth of my Judaic studies at various seminaries, the work I have done with clients while in the D.Min. program at HUC-JIR, and the guidance from my theological teachers and clinical supervisors in the D.Min. and Judaic Studies program at HUC-JIR. The religious lens for this work will be that of Reform Judaism and as such the sacred texts used in that tradition for worship and study.

In general, the issue of faith and spirituality are topics that I have seen come up repeatedly in one-on-one dialogues with individuals that I have worked with over the past three years. Over the millennia there has emerged an extensive body of work written on these topics in religious texts and more recently in clinical psychology writings. The core texts I will be using in this paper are given in the references cited at the conclusion of this paper and in various places throughout this thesis. The focal

spiritual themes of this paper will be that of *Emunah* (faith), *Yirah* (fear and awe), *Chesed* (love), and *Ruach* (spirit in action) and their interrelationship.

Literature Review

The literature review is divided into two major sections, Religious Literature and Psychological Literature. The themes of faith, awe, fear, and spirit are first presented in the religious literature section with some direct and indirect references to God. The subjects of Faith and Spirit return in the psychological literature section in relationship to the experience of God and their influence on the Self.

Religious Literature

The Middot of Faith (Heb. *Emunah*). Morinis (2008) introduces the topic of Faith by calling our attention to the questions that he suspects often come up in a person's youth about space, time, and life that can confound one's thinking. He states that:

No one has to introduce these questions to us. They arise unbidden when we are quiet under the night sky, or catch a glimpse of the structure and texture of a hand, or meet our first painful, unaccountable loss, or lie alone in bed shielded from the storm, and wonder. Somehow, most of us reach an accommodation with the profound mystery of life that allows us to get on with living human lives. Some of us turn away from the large questions, which doesn't dispose of them but just tucks them into the back of life's closet. Others receive and accept answers that are really nothing but platitudes and hollow certainties about faith. A few reach

their own understanding of the larger issues of life that seem satisfactory.

(Morinis 2008, p. 220)

The way that one works out a personal relationship with the mysteries of the universe in these formative years has a tendency to be carried as a part of one's beliefs into adulthood. It is for this and other reasons to be discussed, Morinis (2008, p. 220) believes the Soul-traits (Middot) associated with faith can be a significant challenge for folk.

One of many reasons that faith in God is such a challenge for adults today is that they have experienced the "horrors and excesses" (Morinis 2008, p. 220) of the numerous tragic events in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These events have quite frankly called into question for them as adults not only the nature of God they may have been taught as a child, but more fundamentally, the very existence of God.

Morinis (2008) states that, "Compelling evidence can be mustered to challenge any basis of faith, so much so that faith itself can seem to be not just the super-rational inner state that by definition it is, but fully irrational, an act that defies the empirical facts (p.221)."

Rav Kook, the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, recognized this challenge of faith when he stated about the question of the divine origin of the Torah: "A person may believe that the Torah is from heaven, but his understanding of heaven may be so skewed that it allows for not a shred of true faith (Morinis, 2008, p. 221)."

Morinis suggests that even when someone has a well-established inner sense of God, they need to be challenged throughout their life in the faith they hold at any given point in time. For Morinis (2008) “a fully resolved faith is a dead faith, since the facts of life challenge faith at every turn. Our understanding, like all our inner qualities, is meant to grow (p. 221).”

Jewish tradition holds that the goal of a life well lived can be summed up in the word wholeness (sh’lemut). Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe (Morinis 2008) says: “We seek only our wholeness.” and, “The foundation of wholeness is faith (p. 222).” Morinis (2008) goes on to state, “Without faith, wholeness will elude us (p. 222).”

I have left a discussion of what faith is until now to provide some back ground on why the idea of faith is difficult for many individuals. One of problems that comes is the notion that faith is about one’s beliefs. Maimonides conceived of faith as not being about “belief” but about “knowledge and understanding.”

With regard to what our understanding of God is or is not, Maimonides believed that the use of theological language was important, “But in the end, the only thing it reveals is that God is beyond the reach of any subject/predicate proposition (in *Maimonides*, 2017, section1.59).” Thus it is stated (in *Maimonides*, 2017):

Know that when you make an affirmation ascribing another thing to Him, you become more remote from Him in two respects: one of them is that everything You affirm is a perfection only with reference to us, And the other is that He does not possess a thing other than His essence ... (Maimonides, 2017, section 1.59)

Citing Psalm 65, Maimonides concludes that the highest form of praise we can give God is silence.

Maimonides knew (*Maimonides*, 2017, section 3.32) that a religion based entirely on silent reflection would never succeed, and insists that daily prayer is mandatory. His point is that the qualities mentioned in prayer are either negations or descriptions of the effects of divine activity; in no case do they provide knowledge of God's essence. But these acts of prayer are daily rituals that can give experienced meaning to one's faith.

The Torah tells us that God was revealed to Moses at Sinai in Exodus 33. In that passage, God refuses to let Moses see the divine face which Maimonides identifies with essence but allows him to see God's backside which Maimonides identifies with the consequences or effects that flow from God. We can therefore praise God as long as we realize that all such praise is indirect and leaves God's essence undescribed and unknowable (see *Maimonides*, 2017). We will return to Maimonides theology in our discussion of the use of his Thirteen Articles of Faith in contemporary Jewish liturgy. Rabbi Perr once said, "Everybody has faith, but only some people know it." (Morinis, 2008, p. 222)

Along this same line of thought David Wolpe (2008) says that faith began in the garden of Eden when God asks the first question of the Bible to Adam, "Where are you?" Wolpe goes on to suggest that "there are questions that open the heart and questions that close the heart (pp. 9-10)." He comments that a questioning statement such as, "Oh yeah!" closes the heart. While a question like, "Will I have the strength to go through this? is ... one of the deepest a human can ask (pp. 9-10)." Paul Tillich

(2009) wrote that, “If faith is understood as belief that something is true, doubt is incompatible with the act of faith. If faith is understood as being ultimately concerned, doubt is a necessary element in it. It is a consequence of the risk of faith (p. 21).”

For Morinis the primary issue:

... is not whether or not you believe in God, but rather a more empirical issue of where to look to find God. If you know where to look for God, then you have the potential to perceive a reality, and that is a far better foundation for faith than either blind belief or adherence to received opinions (Morinis, 2008 p. 223).

With religion for all the illumination its ancient disciplines bring us, it also takes us into the dark by pointing to an unknowable God. A God whom we learn from experience that cannot be captured in some formula, ascribed to some cause, or to a particular system of beliefs. Everyone who tries to pray comes to know this in one way or another. “To whom do I cry aloud,” Rilke asked (Morinis, 2008 p. 223). And who, we must also ask, is it that we expect to answer our calls delivered in prayer?

Wolpe found that part of what kept him away from God was the assumption that he knew what religion was. He began to ask himself and others these questions about faith:

1. Do you believe only that which is tangible – that which you can see or touch or measure – is real, or do you believe there is an intangible reality?
2. Do you believe that there is a mystery at the heart of the universe that we will never be able to fully understand, not through lack of effort because it cannot be understood (Wolpe, 2008, p. 10)?

For Wolpe, he has found that each day of his life:

... is touched by experiences that have nothing to do with proof. The music of my daughter's laugh, the thrill of reading a profound thought, a quiet moment at home with my wife. Who can prove that these are important? Who would wish to prove it? The deepest experiences of life are not the fruit of reason but of love (Wolpe, 2008, p. 189).

Next let us turn to the experience of Awe and Fear.

The Middot of Awe and Fear (Hebrew *Yirah*). Morinis (2011) relates that, "merged within the word *yirah* are two human experiences that are linked in the Hebrew but separated in English. One is fear. The other is awe (p. 232)."

The thing that is striking about the dual meanings of the Hebrew word *yirah* is that it is both of these dimensions that provide foundational elements for the central themes of the Days of Awe, also known as the High Holy Days of New Year's Day (*Rosh HaShanah*) and Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). We can clearly see the fear element in the *Untaneh Tokef* found in the liturgy of both holidays. These two liturgies also contain passages related to the experience of Awe.

It is here that it seems appropriate to turn our attention to the use of faith and awe experience in liturgy.

The Liturgy of Reform Judaism on Faith (*Emunah*), Awe (*Yirah*), and Spirit (*Ruach*). The liturgy of the High Holidays presents us with many different views on faith and the experience of Awe. The contemporary reflections on ancient words provides us

with a useful backdrop for exploring the nature of faith, the uses of faith in one's life, and the challenges we encounter with our own beliefs and practice or lack thereof with regard to expressions of faith such as prayer.

Rabbi Joseph Solovietchik of blessed memory, captured the two-sided nature of faith experience in his essay "The Lonely Man of Faith." His teaching can be helpful as one wrestles with one's thoughts and grapples with our challenges of faith during the Days of Awe. Rabbi Soloveitchik's essay looks at the two tales of creation contained in the first two chapters of Genesis.

He notes that in Genesis 1:28, God commands Adam, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Here, humanity is given dominion over the earth. Soloveitchik speaks of the Adam of this first story of creation as "the Majestic Adam — Adam the First." He "is aggressive, bold and victory minded. His motto is success." Adam the First surely reflects a dimension of who we are as men and women — bright, creative, and confident.

In God's "numinous solitude," as Rabbi Soloveitchik phrases it, God creates the human — Adam the Second — to relieve divine loneliness, only to notice that Adam the Second is also lonely. To exist, this story teaches, is to be, in some profound sense, constantly alone. Therefore, Adam the Second is given a companion to alleviate his lonely state. Furthermore, Adam the Second does not seek to subdue the world. Rather, Adam the Second and his companion care for the world and seek refuge and comfort in one another. While Adam the First was

called to a life of dignity and respect by gaining dominion over nature, Rabbi Soloveitchik contends that Adam the Second seeks a life of redemption by recognizing that dependency and finitude mark our personhood. (as cited in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah: Machzor* for the Days of Awe, Page xxiii)

This view of Self and Other is reflected in the views of Winnicott, Lacan, and Bion which will be discussed in the Psychological Literature section.

In writing about why Jews feel compelled to attend in mass High Holiday services, Harold Kushner (1996) states that he begins the Yom Kippur eve service with the words, "By the consent of the authorities in heaven and on earth, we permit sinners to enter and be a part of the congregation (p. 5)." He asks, "who are these sinners (p. 5)?" His reply is that every member of the congregation who hears these words believes they are addressed to him, or her. It is Kushner's belief that the synagogue is filled to capacity because his congregants have come:

... to be assured that their misdeeds have not separated them from the love of God. They are not looking to be judged and condemned. They are looking to feel cleansed, to gain the confidence and the sense of forgiveness and acceptance that will enable them to begin the New Year without the burden of the past year's failures (Kushner, 1996, p.6).

I believe that guilt is a terrible burden for one to carry around year after year which is why having this opportunity to forgive ourselves and others is so important for our sense of wholeness. Rachel Naomi Ramen (2006) reports that Carl Rogers in a

master class at Stanford University stated that he said to himself before each therapeutic encounter:

There is something I do before I start each session. I let myself know that I am enough. Not perfect. *Perfect wouldn't be enough*. But that I am human, and that is enough. There is nothing this man can say or do that I can't feel in myself. I can be with him. I am enough (as cited in Ramen, 2006, p. 217).

For me Rogers is invoking the idea that we do not have to be perfect but as Winnicott has suggested it is alright to be 'good enough' as in 'the good enough mother' which Ulanov (2005, p. 13) relates to the experience of us being in unity with a good enough God.

This brings us to a question about the role of love. For our purposes love will be viewed as loving kindness (*Chesed*), as opposed to the more common word for love (*Ahavah*), which is about love between people or toward God. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks asks the question:

WHAT IS *CHESED*? It is usually translated as "kindness" but it also means "love"—not love as emotion or passion, but love expressed as deed. Theologians define *chesed* as covenant love. Covenant is the bond by which two parties pledge themselves to one another, agreeing to join their separate destinies into a single journey that they will travel together.... *Chesed* is the love that is loyalty, and the loyalty that is love. It is born in the generosity of faithfulness, the love that means being ever-present for the other, in hard times as well as good; love that grows stronger, not weaker, over time. Those who know it experience the world

differently from those who do not. It is not for them a threatening and dangerous place. It is one where trust is rewarded precisely because it does not seek reward. *Chesed* is the gift of love that begets love. (as cited in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Yom Kippur*, 2015, p. 358)

The poem 'FAITH' by David Whyte evokes his personal wrestling with the notion of faith when he states:

Faith.

I want to write about faith,
about the way the moon rises over cold snow,
night after night, faithful even as it fades from fullness,
slowly becoming that last curving and impossible sliver of light before the final
darkness.

But I have no faith myself I refuse it even the smallest entry.

Let this then, my small poem, like a new moon, slender and barely open,
be the first prayer that opens me to faith. (as cited in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah*, 2015, p. 65)

Rabbi Milton Steinberg wrote the following words upon leaving the hospital after a lengthy stay. His words reflect a different message from that of Whyte, the propensity to feel intense gratitude for our lives when one has come close to losing their life:

AFTER A LONG ILLNESS, I was permitted for the first time to step outdoors.
And as I crossed the threshold, sunlight greeted me. So long as I live I shall

never forget that moment.... And everywhere in the firmament above me, in the great vault between earth and sky, on the pavements, the buildings—the golden glow of sunlight. It touched me, too, with friendship, with warmth, with blessing.... And I remembered how often I had been indifferent to the sunlight, how often preoccupied with petty and sometimes mean concerns, I had disregarded it. And I said to myself, How precious is the sunlight, but alas, how careless of it we are. Source of blessings— may we open our eyes to the radiance around us; may we open our hearts with gratitude, and our souls with appreciation. (in Greenberg, 1962, p. 273).

Nowhere are there found more profound statements of this wrestling with one's sense of faith than in that found in this contemporary version of the poem 'Avinu Malkeinu' and in Rabbi Alvin Fine's, of blessed memory poem, 'A SACRED PILGRIMAGE,' expressed as one prepares to say the Mourner's *Kaddish*. Both are given below:

AVINU MALKEINU: A PRAYER FOR RENEWAL.

Tonight we speak again in a time of drought—
dry ground beneath us; no water, only rock.
Not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water,
but hearts that are longing to hear God's voice.
For the Sea of Faith is all but gone;
The tide's gone out on the empty beach.
The world mocks our hopes and life tests our courage.
Why do the wicked live on and prosper?

Why are You silent when they prey on the innocent?

And if Your dominion is kindness and justice, why is Creation in so much pain?

Avinu Malkeinu, sustain our souls.

Send rain to our roots; help us find a way to pray.

Make us humble and forgiving

of ourselves and one another.

Avinu Malkeinu—renew these words.

Help us speak them with conviction and believe their truth. (as cited in *Mishkan*

HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah, 2015, p. 75)

In the following poem by Rabbi Fine one can see that life is a sacred journey marked by the ups and downs of life. Along that journey there are opportunities to transform one's fear into faith and that what is important is not the heights one has obtained but the fact that one made the journey, step by step in one's own way.

A SACRED PILGRIMAGE.

Birth is a beginning and death a destination.

But life is a journey: from childhood to maturity and youth to age;

from innocence to awareness and ignorance to knowing;

from foolishness to discretion and then, perhaps to wisdom;

from weakness to strength or strength to weakness— and often, back again.

From health to sickness and back, we pray, to health again;

from offense to forgiveness, from loneliness to love,

from joy to gratitude, from pain to compassion, and grief to understanding—

from fear to faith; from defeat to defeat to defeat—

until, looking backward or ahead we see that victory lies not at some high place along the way, but in having made the journey, stage by stage, a sacred pilgrimage.

Birth is a beginning and death a destination.

But life is a journey, a sacred pilgrimage—

made stage by stage—

from birth to death to life everlasting. (as cited in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah*, 2015, p. 86)

Let us now turn to the *Yigdal*, a series of statements about the nature of God which are attributed to Rabbi Daniel ben Judah of Rome (14th century). Rabbi ben Judah based his work on Rabbi Moses Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith which are still considered by many Jews to be central tenants of Judaism.

Yigdal.

Great is the Living Source. Praised be the Existence that exists beyond time.

One and unique, You are the fathomless Unity — infinite and alone.

Without body, form, or image, You are Holiness immeasurable.

Before all creation — You! You are the Beginning with no beginning of its own.

Behold! *Adon Olam* — a sovereignty sublime — You are the Greatness we see in every facet of creation.

Wellspring flowing with prophecy, You are the Gift of glory to Your precious ones who treasure their calling.

In Israel's history, none like Moses would arise again; You gave us a prophet who made Your Presence known.

By the hand of Your most faithful prophet You gave the House of Israel a Torah of truth.

Ours is an ageless faith, an eternal law — and You are the Lawgiver whose law will not be supplanted or replaced.

The consequences of our deeds are seen and known by Conscience, Your sacred home within us.

You are the Source of kindness, rewarding acts of compassion; You are the Source of love, condemning wickedness and correcting it.

At the End of Days there will come an era of redemption; for those who await deliverance, a messianic age.

You implanted within us eternal life — our immortal yearnings, our undying hopes. Blessed is Your Glorious Name from eternity to eternity. (in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah*, 2015, p. 297)

But we are still faced with how does one experience a personal sense of God and God's Holiness? The current Reform *Machzor* gives a three-part series of prayers, each beginning with the word *Uvchein* (And so) derived from the traditional *Uvchein* prayers of all *Machzorim*. Each part explores a way in which God's holiness manifests itself in our lives through the gift of awe. The ability to respond with awe and wonder to

the natural world is perhaps one of most profound paths to the experience of faith.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel) of blessed memory, taught that:

“... the absence of awe leads, in the end, to immoral behavior: The surest way to suppress our ability to understand the meaning of God and the importance of worship is to take things for granted. Indifference to the sublime wonder of living is the root of sin (as cited in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah*, 2015, p. 313).”

First of the three *Uvchein* prayers is given below:

How Do We Sense God’s Holiness? Through Awe

And so, in Your holiness, give all creation the gift of awe.

Turn our fear to reverence; let us be witnesses of wonder —
perceiving all nature as a prayer come alive.

We bow to the sovereignty of Your strength, the primacy of Your power.

We yearn for connection with all that lives, doing Your will with wholeness of heart.

Awe-inspiring is Your creation, all-encompassing Your transcendent name. (as cited in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah*, 2015, p. 313)

For more about the *Uvchein* prayers on, How Do We Sense God’s Holiness?, see Appendix D.

Before we leave this section a close look at the *Untaneh Tokef* seems in order which gives a sense of awe with regard to God’s power:

And so a great shofar will cry — *t’kiah*. A still small voice will be heard.

Angels, in a whirl of fear and trembling, will say: “Behold the day of judgment”

— for they too are judged; in Your eyes even they are not blameless.

All who come into the world pass before You like sheep before their shepherd.

As a shepherd considers the flock, when it passes beneath the staff,

You count and consider every life. You set bounds;

You decide destiny; You inscribe judgments.

On *Rosh HaShanah* this is written; on the Fast of Yom Kippur this is sealed:

How many will pass away from this world, how many will be born into it;

who will live and who will die;

who will reach the ripeness of age,

who will be taken before their time;

who by fire and who by water;

who by war and who by beast;

who by famine and who by drought;

who by earthquake and who by plague;

who by strangling and who by stoning;

who will rest and who will wander;

who will be tranquil and who will be troubled;

who will be calm and who tormented;

who will live in poverty and who in prosperity;

who will be humbled and who exalted —

You are everything that we praise You for: slow to anger, quick to forgive.

You do not wish the death of sinners, but urge them to return from their ways and live.

Until the day of death, You wait for them;

You accept them at once if they return.

Since You created us, You know our impulses;

we are but flesh and blood.

We who are mortal — our origin is dust, and so is our end.

We wear out our lives to get our bread

— like broken vessels, like withered grass, like a flower that must fade,

a shadow moving on, a cloud passing by, mere dust on the wind, a dream that

flies away. (in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Yom Kippur: Machzor* for the Days of Awe,

2015, pp. 210- 216)

The above passages reflect our vulnerabilities as beings created from dust and remind us that judgement awaits the end of our days. I know of no other Jewish liturgical passage that evokes the theme of our fears more profoundly. And yet, there is also in these words a sense of God being patient with us despite our failings, awaiting for us to return to a state of wholeness through *teshuvah*, forgiveness of sin, which is cause for hope. This passage also alludes to the Kabbalah with its statement about broken vessels which will be discussed later. As we will see next that hope for *teshuvah* is dependent on action, not just prayer. The driver of this action is ruach or spirit.

Spirit (*Ruach*). Below are some thoughts about from where does this spirit come, this *ruach* that leads to action enters the High Holiday liturgy through the words:

IT IS WRITTEN: “Know before whom you stand”— but in truth we do not know.

Perhaps we stand before our history— a chronicle of stubbornness, quiet heroism and the will to live.

Perhaps it is the memory of those who struggled to be human in a world that was dark and cold.

Perhaps it is Torah that summons us to rise: the golden chain of tradition; a reverence for learning; permission to question and doubt.

Perhaps we stand before ideals that call us to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly on this earth.

Perhaps it is awe at the kinship of all that live, or the Unknowable, Unnamable mystery that brought us here.

We stand together: seekers, doubters, and those who are firm in their faith.

And this we know: The day is short; the work immense; the laborers are reluctant; the reward is great; and the need is urgent. (as cited in Mishkan HaNefesh: Yom Kippur: Machzor for the Days of Awe, 2015, pp. 210- 216)
(For additional information about this quote see Appendix D).

As one looks at the liturgy of *Untaneh Tokef* we find the unsettling realization that:

IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES, we live with an illusion of control. We guard our health by eating well, exercising, and getting regular checkups. We get ahead professionally by working hard and building effective relationships. At the

liturgical moment of *Untaneh Tokef*, we are forced to admit how profoundly our lives can be altered by random occurrences over which we have no control.

... At the moment of *Untaneh Tokef* I know for a certainty that my life hangs in the balance. When these High Holy Days end, I may be lulled back into my false sense of security, the cocoon of my routine. But today I feel my exposure, sense the danger inherent in life, re-encounter my mortality. My end is dust. (in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Yom Kippur: Machzor* for the Days of Awe, 2015, pp. 210- 216)

We are left to wonder how can I face this uncertain future, this lack of control over what happens in my life? It is here again that the answer comes in specific actions that one can take to retain at least some sense of control. Rabbi David A. Teutsch is said to have stated:

I cannot control the unexpected blows that will affect my family, my job, my health. But I can control how I live with them. *T'shuvah* (cultivating a spiritual life and returning to Torah), *t'filah* (cultivating gratitude and connecting with transcendent values), and *tzedakah* (cultivating generosity and pursuing justice) will mitigate the bad in the decree. *T'shuvah*, *t'filah*, and *tzedakah* will not stop stock-market crashes, lung cancer, or the other blows that come our way, but they can radically transform how we are affected by those blows. (as cited in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah*, 2015, p. 173)

It is said that: “Life is not measured by the number of breathes we take, but the moments that take our breathe away.” (Anonymous, 1970’s).

These words from the Reform *Machzorim* for the High Holidays have given us insight into the ways that one wrestles with their faith is central to the Jewish experience of what it means to be holy, a life focused on creating wholeness.

We have read about the themes of *Emunah* (faith), *Yirah* (fear and awe), *Chesed* (love), and *Ruach* (spirit in action). We now turn our attention to seeing what insights the clinical psychology literature can provide to our understanding of the nature of faith and the experience of God.

Psychological Literature

Clinical Psychology Literature on Faith and God. From a psychological perspective chief among that which may help us answer what is the nature of faith is in fact our own unconscious. However awkward its name, it has been shown to exist. It is there inside us, each of us, affecting us, stirring us, moving and challenging us whether we know it or not, whether we acknowledge it or not. Ulanov confronts this dilemma of who will answer us when she states:

It is scandalous to many that an infinite God should move into the trivial world of the human psyche to speak. Better to put God at a safe distance in pulpits, in political ideologies, in obscure biblical texts. We resist God touching us intimately in dreams, in myths, in our bodies, in our social groupings, in all our little worlds. Yet depth psychology drives this fact home: that God does touch us in the flesh,

in the least of our moments as well as in the largest, in all our private and shared experiences. (Ulanov, 2012, lines 63-67)

Michael Eigen in his essay, "The Area of Faith in Winnicott, Lacan, and Bion," states that:

For them (Winnicott, Lacan, and Bion), I believe, the vicissitudes of faith mark the central point around which psychic turmoil and conflict gather. In the hands of these authors, further, the area of faith tends to become a founding principle for the possibility of a fully human consciousness, an intrinsic condition of self-other awareness as such. (Eigen, 2004, p. 109)

For Eigen faith or one's lack of faith plays a significant role in patient and therapist sessions. Eigen describes Bion's view of knowing as two kinds of transformations, K-transformations and O-transformations. Where K represents actual knowledge or knowing while O represents that which is the "unknowable ultimate reality, (Eigen, 2011, p. 4)." What is important for this study is that O-transformations are those mysteries approachable by faith and also represent a radical openness that should not be closed off prematurely by K-transformation. This waiting for O-transformations can be thought of in the analytic setting as allowing the patient to find his or her way to be "at-onement with oneself or, simply, atonement, with or without self (Eigen, 2011, p. 5)."

Eigen (2004) goes on to relate that one's initial developmental encounter with faith may occur at that moment described in Winnicott's statement:

The subject says to the object: 'I destroyed you,' and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says: 'Hullo object!' 'I destroyed you.' 'I love you.' 'You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you.' 'While I am loving you, I am all the time destroying you in (unconscious) *fantasy*.' (Winnicott, 1971, pp. 120-121)

It is at this intersection of child and object that the vulnerable child attempts to destroy the other, and this object's survival in what has become thought of as a transitional space is what brings about for Eigen (2004) "the paradox of faith to a new level (p. 113)." Winborn (2014 p. 4) relates this early childhood development state to Jung's concept of participation mystique where there exists a primitive mental state of non-differentiation of the subject, in this case the child, and an object, the good-enough mother upon which the child depends (Jung, 1976, p. 441).

Ulanov with regard to Winnicott's observation of our early desire to connect with the other, if not test that connection states:

But Winnicott stands here in a long line of significant minds that witness to the formidable power of our longing to unite with reality. Religion testifies to the astounding fact that reality at its center, pictured as God, also longs to unite with us. ... the power of play in the transitional space ... symbolizes our coming to be of our self in unity with a good-enough mother – opens up to us a range of play with religious objects that symbolize our coming to be a self in unity with a good-enough God. We locate Winnicott here with the mystics who experience the

truth of Augustine's insight that to know oneself is to know God. (Ulanov, 2005, p.13)

The thing to note here is that for Winnicott and the others (Lacan and Bion) the notion of faith is expressed as a transitional experience in which one makes use of the other as an object. Ulanov (2005) reflects on this view when she states: "Located in this transitional space, we see that our religious experience arrives neither totally from outside ourselves, like a lightening bolt, nor totally from inside ourselves, as from a dream, but in the space in between (p. 20)."

For Ulanov the idea of God can be seen to have evolved over time to meet our needs. She states:

Transcendent theologies see God as existing utterly separate from human experience, as prime mover ... Immanent theologies put forward new versions of ancient adoptionist theologies of the third and fourth centuries. God originates from our human side – our wishes or our social values – and is projected upward, adopted into the divine realm as our most pressing need, if not our most cherished value. This God does not enter our lives born out the transcendent but is created by our wishes and our needs and our very best efforts and achievements, such as reason, compassion, virtue.

Contemporary theologies of all kinds of liberation to do with race, gender, sexual stance, political status, and even psychological type comprise our most recent renditions of creating the God we need to find.

... we see that transcendent and immanent theologies form two side of the same coin. Their enemy is reductionism – God is only our projections or God is only something far outside us and quite unknowable. These reductions result from the foreclosing of our transitional space. ...

But any of us who look to our experience for information about this object God will know that we land irrevocably in between the God that tradition gives us and the God we create out the stuff of human life. (Ulanov, 2005, pp. 20-21)

Winnicott's work on our earliest transitional spaces when the child moves from experiencing simply his or her omnipotence to that of experiencing both self and the other, as that which enables us to see our transition into self in relation to the Holy, an experience of faith. In addition, Ulanov gives us insight into how human existence informs us about how our connection to God does not happen in a closed transitional space.

Ulanov reminds us that:

As valuable as abstract theories about God are, if they do not include our personal projections, they are not tough enough to survive the vicissitudes of war, of mental breakdown, of societal strife, of dying in a hospital or living homeless in a doorway. When we feel our faces pushed right up against the borders of life and death, of fear and comforting certainty, of terrors of loss and the reassurance of reconnection, we need grounding in our bodies, in our

communities, and in what we hear “ringing in the silence” that our living from the depth of our psyches provides. (Ulanov, 2005, p. 21)

When Ulanov speaks about our personal projections or uses the word *image*, she is doing so:

... to refer to the great range of ways in which we differently apprehend God, some of us visually, others through body sensations, textures, smells, sounds, through nearness or distance. Here we need to pay close attention to both the personal and the official sets of images as they come to compose the boundaries of the space in which our religious experience dwells. (Ulanov, 2005, pp 21-22)

Corbett (2015) talks about how faith has a significant presence in the lives of his patients. He states that: “Without faith, many people would collapse emotionally-for them, faith is more important than reliance on reason alone” (p. 85). Of particular interest is the dual nature that this faith can take, in that it can be: “a source of strength but also of religious violence” (p. 85). Corbett saw one’s faith to be difficult to define precisely because it is among other things connected to both trust and hope. This view of faith seems to be directly related to those of Carl Jung which will be discussed in the next section of this literature review.

Clinical Psychology Literature on Spirit and God. Within clinical psychology there occurred fairly early in the 20th century a split between those that followed Freud’s focus on the strictly scientific approach to understanding mental processes and those that were open to both scientific and spiritual aspects of mental processes such as

those advocated by Carl Jung. Into this divide emerged Rudolf Otto (1925) who introduced the word 'numinous' as a state of mind which cannot be strictly defined but can be understood as a stirring of something within one's life that is evoked into consciousness. Otto (1925) states this experience: "X cannot, strictly speaking, be taught, it can only be evoked, awakened in the mind; as everything that comes 'of the spirit' must be awakened" (p. 7).

For Otto the Creator can be experienced in two simultaneous ways: "as a *mysterium tremendum*, that is, with a feeling of awe and shuddering before an unapproachable Being that is living energy and 'totally other.' But, in contrast ... as a *Fascinans*, that is, as something that attracts and fills with blissful exaltations (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 724)." This description of the experience of God is parallel to that discussed earlier under *Yirah* as both one of fear and awe.

Lionel Corbett argues that the numinous does not emerge exactly as Otto states: To argue that numinous experience arises purely from within one's psyche makes an artificial distinction that ignores Jung's insistence that an element of the divine is located deep with our subjectivity. For Jung, unlike Rudolf Otto, the divine is not wholly Other, because there is no sharp distinction between a transcendent divinity and what Jung refers to as Self, an innate image of the divine. This level, which is the core of our being, is the ultimate source of numinous experience. (Corbett, 2012, p. 15)

It would appear that the numinous or divine is both an evoked state and at the core of one's sense of Self. Jung was known for asserting that: "man is naturally religious (Ellenberger, 1970, p. 724)."

Jung went on to develop an area of psychology called Depth Psychology in which the numinous as divine is a central concept which Corbett (2012) describes as a powerful approach to understanding, "the manifestations of the sacred in our lives" (p.5).

C. G. Jung spoke about the difference between spirit and matter in his essay, "Psychological Factors Determining Human Behavior." This discourse seems to layout the basic nature of scientific truth versus spiritual truth for Jung.

It is true that matter is in general the subject of physics, but it is also a psychic category, as the history of religion and philosophy clearly shows. And just as matter is ultimately to be conceived of merely as a working hypothesis of physics, so also spirit, the subject of religion and philosophy, is a hypothetical category in constant need of reinterpretation. The so-called reality of matter is attested primarily by our sense-perceptions, while belief in the existence of spirit is supported by psychic experience. Psychologically, we cannot establish anything more final with respect to either matter or spirit than the presence of certain conscious contents, some of which are labelled as having a material, and others a spiritual, origin. In the consciousness of civilized peoples, it is true, there seems to exist a sharp division between the two categories, but on the primitive level the

boundaries become so blurred that matter often seems endowed with “soul” while spirit appears to be material. (Jung, 1960, p. 120)

We can see from the above that both physics and spirit are in need of reinterpretation and that the nature of matter, the subject of physics, is determined by our sense perceptions while the nature of spirit is determined by psychic experience. Yet, at times the boundaries between the two can become blurred.

Jung in the essay “Spirit and Life” (1960) says that he believes spirit is necessary for life because, “a life lived entirely from the ego is dull not only for the person himself but for all concerned” (p. 336). Jung speaks about how the fullness of life requires more than ego alone. He sees life and spirit as two powers between which man is placed where spirit makes life meaningful while life is essential for spirit to be. Jung (2011) has stated that:

Among all my patients in the second half of life—that is to say, over thirty-five—there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook (p. 234).

There seems to run through much of Jung’s work a respect for religious concerns such as spirit being a force necessary for the wholeness of one’s life to occur.

Ulanov (1996) considers the spiritual aspects of clinical work using the idea of the transcendent function which Jung (1976) considers the “equivalent to a renewal of

life (where) ... the soul is born again in God" p. 252). For Ulanov it is through connecting to the transcendent function inside our psyche that: "opens us to the god transcendent to our whole psyche. We listen through perversions to receive a bulletin from the Self to our self. ... Only thus do we find our vocation, what Jung calls living according to the will of God" (p. 56).

Eigen (2012, lines 216-223) relates how in his conversations with Bion he came to accept Bion's belief that there is a connection between psychoanalysis and the Kabbalah, a Jewish philosophical perspective that evolved over time into a collection of work known as the Zohar. According one story in the Zohar at the beginning of the creation of the universe God had a problem. Namely, how does one go about creating something if you are everything, the *Ein Sof* (without end)? It is here that Eigen tells us about how God's problem given in the Kabbalah teachings found in the Zohar are much the same as that which one can face as a psychoanalyst.

There is no room for creation if God fills everything. God's problem is how to make room for anything but God. Rabbi Luria (1534–1572) in Safed and Jacob Boehme, a German mystic born two years after Rabbi Luria died, had similar solutions. God contracts to make room for the world.

In Rabbi Luria's story, even though God tried to make room for us, something went wrong. Vessels that were meant to hold and transmit and transmute godly energy shattered. Vessels emanating creation broke at lower levels of formation. They could not take the intensity of the energy they were mediating. Some of the higher channels remained intact, but those most involved in what turned out to be

our world (and us) shattered. ... *Shekinah* (the feminine aspect of God), whatever else, is God's Presence in us, on earth, in the tenth *Sephirot, Malkut*, one of the shattered spheres, dimensions, vessels, channels. ... It is said our challenge, our job, is to repair the rupture. Wherever we are, embedded in the shatter, in the shards, the brokenness, there are divine sparks awaiting redemption with our help. And we are helped by the Divine Presence, the *Shekinah*.

That creation and the creative process could not bear its own intensity teaches us, as psychotherapists, to go slow, dose it (our therapy) out. (Eigen, 2012, Locations 223-226)

Eigen then relates how W. R. Bion's view of the role of psychotherapist with regard to the human condition is parallel to that of Luria's story of God in creating the universe in as much as:

... our (human) system cannot take very much of itself. Experiencing cannot take too much experiencing. We do not know what to do with ourselves and our experiential capacity. The latter produces experiences that are too much for us, that we cannot "handle". If one meets this situation, begins taking it in, a broader attitude develops. If the patient seems not to be changing and you are getting impatient and irritated, contract, make room for apparent unchanging. Armed with Luria-Bion, you are aware that our system cannot take too much. Changes of energy, shifts of being and ways of being might be too much for this patient now.

The patient's "unchanging" might be too much for you now. Contract, make room, for the patient and yourself, your frustration and the patient's slow pace. (Eigen, 2012, lines 232-238)

Grotstein (2000) contends that Bion sought to understand how emotional experience relates to that of knowing one's reality without pretense or distortion through transcendent knowledge:

In his epistemological pilgrimage, Bion retraced the philosophical contributions of leading thinkers of the past His endeavor was to find out what inheres within us that allows us to grasp, process, and internalize our experiences so that we can grow from them. Ultimately, he was to come upon O and intuition, the former being, in the Kantian sense, a transcendent entity and the latter a transcendental (a priori) entity which allows us to divine the beyond from the inherent, a priori "beyond" within us ... These achievements are hard to overestimate. They constitute an epistemic and ontological metapsychological metatheory that elegantly extends and graces Klein's enterprise as well as that of Freud's (drive theory). This metatheory, especially with the Truth of emotional experience as its centerpiece and driving force, Faith as its all-hovering guardian and presence and O as its origin and realization introduce not only epistemic and ontological theory into psychoanalysis but also teleology and especially transcendence. (pp. 301-302)

On a related theme to the Kabbalistic notion of brokenness Kalsched (2013) states:

True to mythology the world over, and true to the human psyche, the act of acknowledging one's own brokenness – the surrendering of all ego-pretense and the acceptance of one's own neediness for deeper resources in the psyche/world. ... (p. 300)

Citing Emmanuel Ghent, Kalsched (2013) takes this proposition further relating one's surrender to their brokenness to that of making a connection to the experience of both wholeness and holiness.

It is worth noting the relation between healing, making whole and holy, all of which are etymological cognates. In this connection note Winnicott's ... description of false self as "missing the boat," or at times simply "missing," "being absent." In the old testament, the Hebrew word designating sin has as its literal meaning to *miss* as in 'missing the boat.' *The cure for missing is to become whole through surrender*, the cure for sinning, in this sense, is to become alive, to be present in full awareness, authentic, centered in the true self, holy. (p. 300)

It is informative for us to consider how there are not only philosophic connections between psyche and religion but also applied psychoanalytic parallels to healing and religious stories such as the Zohar's Kabbalistic creation narrative. This creation narrative will be revisited in the concluding discussion section of this work. In addition, psychoanalytic theory needs to recognize that knowing one's reality is connected to emotional experience, faith and O. The " 'Other' that lies 'just beyond, within, and around' where we are. (Grotstein, 2000, p. 301).

In this review of the literatures of both religion and clinical psychology there is a connection to the central areas of investigation for this project, namely: 1) the nature of faith and where it comes from, 2) what one's experience of God can entail including fear and awe, and 3) the force toward wholeness known as spirit or '*ruach*' can emerge from both within ourselves and from out of ourselves. Moreover, there is this desire to connect in meaningful ways throughout one's life to the other whether divine as in the experience of a "good enough" God or that of a "good enough" other human being.

Methods

Mussar Workshop

Overview. This workshop was proposed in March of 2017 to be one of the adult education offerings at Temple Sinai in Stamford, Connecticut for the Jewish calendar year of 5778. In order to be included on the synagogue's annual calendar of events for the coming year the proposal had to be submitted for review during the spring of the preceding year. Rabbi Jay TelRav approved the workshop and the timing of the event at the author of this work's meeting with him in late March 2017.

The idea for the workshop came out of a series of comments by participants in the bi-weekly Mussar workshops held at Temple Sinai about the relationship of God to the *Middot* under discussion. The Rabbi purposely minimized the discussion of God during these bi-weekly workshops because of limited time and a desire to not have discussions of God becoming a distraction for some members of the group. When the investigator proposed running a workshop of at least one session outside the normal Mussar

meetings to cover the topics of God, Spirituality, and Faith, the Rabbi thought it was a good idea and was willing to support the effort.

It was thought that a workshop held shortly after the High Holidays would be the most appropriate time for this special workshop since many of the themes of the workshop would be fresh in the minds of potential participants. In addition, the timing would facilitate timely completion of the workshop for the review of results of this study by the demonstration project review committee.

Promotion. The workshop was promoted in four ways. There was a booklet given out during the High Holidays called the *Scroll of Living*; Weekly emails to the entire Congregation during September and October of the workshop year; a special email of upcoming adult education programs; and Rabbi TelRav sent out personal email invitations to select congregants whom he thought would be interested in the workshop, see Appendix A for details of these items.

Participants: It was expected that about half of the Mussar twenty-four regular participants and possibly a few other individuals would be interested in attending the workshop. There were eleven individuals that signed up for the workshop. However, only eight individuals were able to attend. It was reported by their spouses that two of the expected participants had decided to stay home and watch the American League Baseball playoffs. The other individual who was not able to attend had a medical emergency in the family.

The overall make of the workshop participants was six women and two men. The ages of participants ranged from their late thirty's to about seventy. It was believed that

all participants had advanced college degrees and worked as professionals in areas such as education, healthcare, and business.

Design. The basic structure consisted of beginning with the completion of a preliminary questionnaire on spirituality and God engagement (see Appendix B); a meditative introduction to the session; preliminary group discussion of the *Middot* and related text under study (see Appendix C poster); a *havruta* (learning in pairs) discussion session of related text (see Appendix C issues list); summary of groups' *havruta* sessions and concluding thoughts; a post workshop questionnaire on spirituality and God engagement and the overall effectiveness of the workshop was completed (see Appendix B), and then post session reflection cards were given out (see Appendix C cards).

The Spirituality scale items were based on the work of James E. Kennedy, Robert C. Davis and Bruce G. Taylor (1998). The Intrinsic Spirituality Scale is one that is well known in the literature for its validity (Hodge, 2003, p. 47). (See Appendix B for the items measured in this scale.)

It was one of the purposes of this workshop to open up for discussion engagement of the participants with the God. The God engagement items consisted of four measures of one's God related beliefs to the major themes of the workshop: faith, spirituality, and the experience of awe and fear. Specifically, they are: 1) whether one believes in God, 2) whether one wrestles with their beliefs about God, 3) whether one's belief in God influences their experience of awe and spirituality 4) whether one's fear of

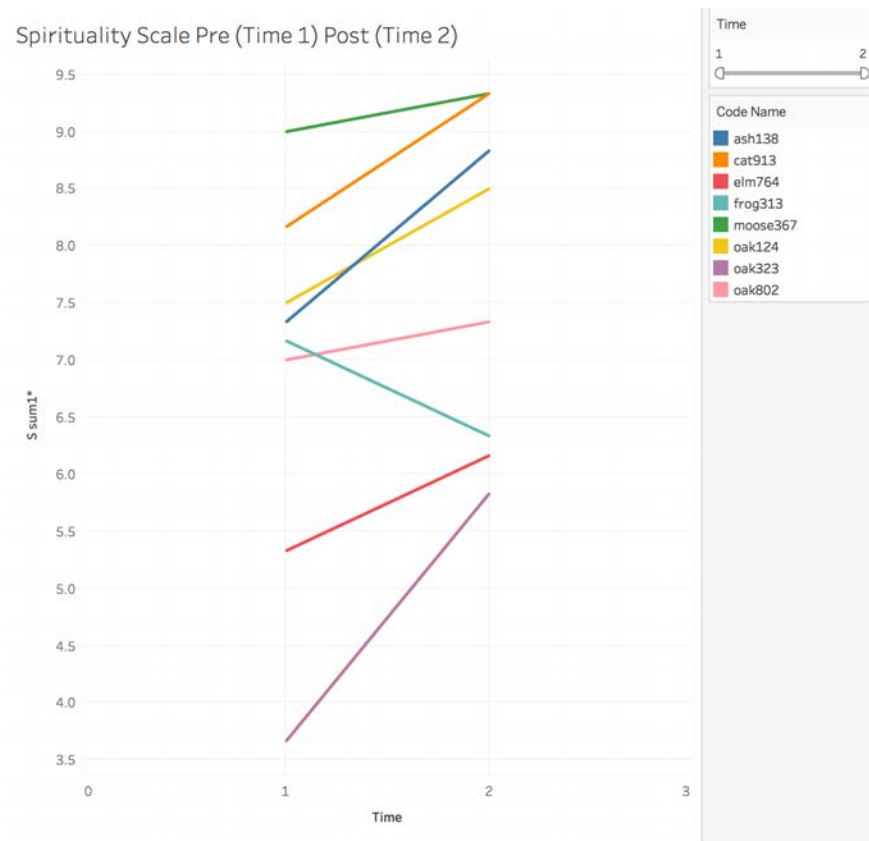
God's judgement influences their behavior (See Appendix B for how these items were measured).

A picture of the room setup is given in Appendix C.

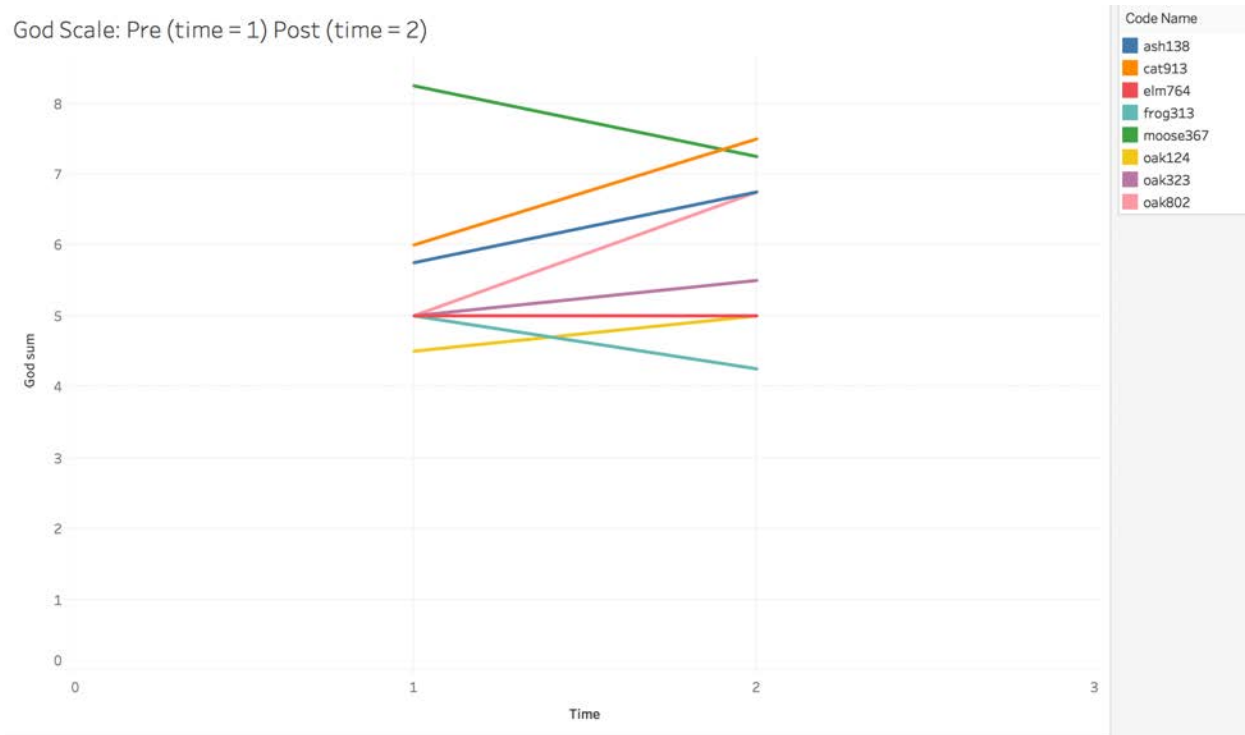
Results

The following set of charts and analysis were done using the mean values of the Spirituality Scale and the God engagement items.

Spirituality Scale and God Engagement Scale Charts. The below chart maps the change in the mean value of the Spirituality Scale from Pre- to Post workshop. It can be seen that Spirituality Scale values increased indicated by up sloping lines for seven of the eight individuals. The overall conclusion is that individuals generally showed a moderate increase in their overall spirituality which appears to support hypothesis H1, that there will be a positive change in one's Spirituality from Pre- to Post measurement.

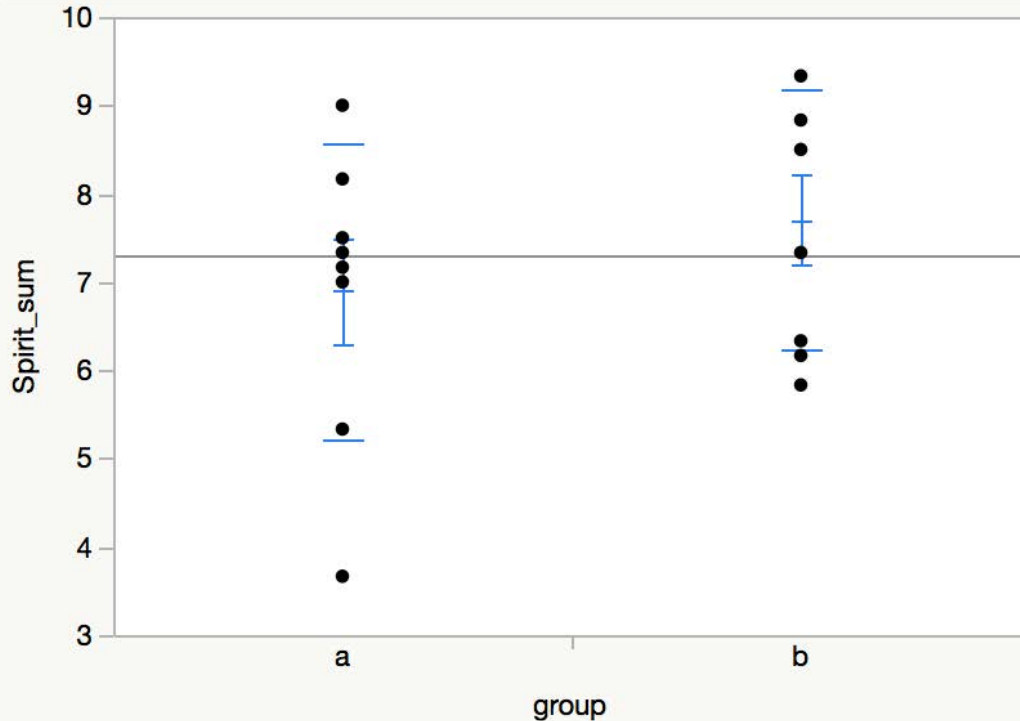


The chart below maps the change in the overall value of the God engagement items treated as a scale of mean values. For five individuals there was a moderate increase in the mean values indicated by up sloping lines while two individuals had a moderate decrease in the mean values indicated by downward sloping lines and one individual's (elm764) mean values did not change indicated by a flat line. Because only five individuals showed an increase in their mean values for this scale it would appear that hypothesis H2, that there will be a positive change in one's God experience Pre- to Post measurement, is only very mildly supported.



One-Way Analysis of Variance. Although the sample size was too small to provide an acceptable level of power to test whether there was a significant difference between pre- and post means of the Spirituality scale and God engagement scale items a simple paired t-test was conducted for both scales for comparison purposes between scales. As was shown in the chart above, the paired t-test analysis below indicates that there is a positive difference in mean values for the Spirituality scale of 6.90 pre- and 7.71 post workshop. However, this difference in values is not considered statistically significant at the 90% or 95% confidence level with a p-value of > t of 0.16.

▼ Oneway Analysis of Spirit_sum By group



▼ Means and Std Deviations

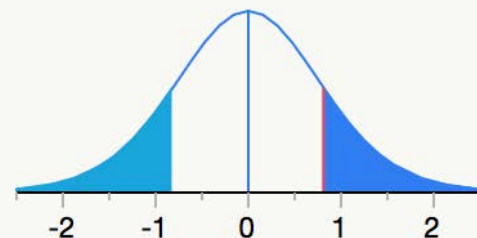
Level	Number	Mean	Std Dev	Std Err Mean	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
a	8	6.89583	1.67127	0.59088	5.4986	8.2931
b	8	7.70833	1.46859	0.51922	6.4806	8.9361

▼ t Test

b-a

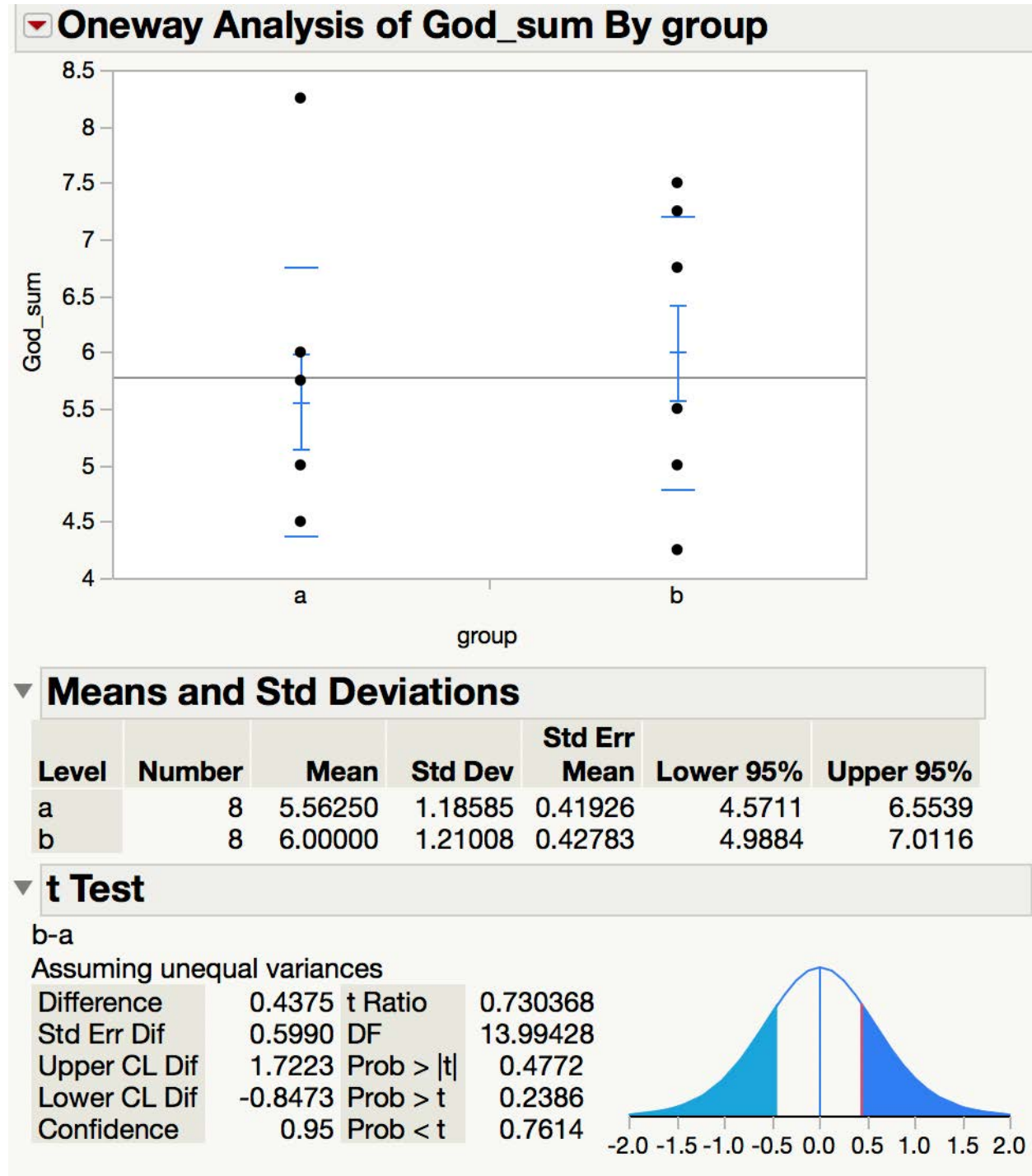
Assuming unequal variances

Difference	0.8125	t Ratio	1.032928
Std Err Dif	0.7866	DF	13.77234
Upper CL Dif	2.5022	Prob > t	0.3194
Lower CL Dif	-0.8772	Prob > t	0.1597
Confidence	0.95	Prob < t	0.8403



Analysis of the God engagement scale items taken as a single measure indicates that there is a very slight overall increase in the mean values from 5.56 Pre- to 6.00 Post workshop. However, the probability of $t > 1$ is 0.2386, which suggests the lack of any

statistically significant difference in the mean values of the God engagement scale between Pre- and Post workshop.



Another way to visualize these scale values is with that of a vertical bar chart. In addition, this chart also shows that the overall rating of the workshop's value to the participants was 9.5 out of 10, signifying that as a group the participants found the workshop very beneficial.



Correlation Analysis. The next set of results look at the correlations of the Spirituality Scale items and the God engagement scale items in separate charts. Reading below the diagonal of “1’s”, one can see that overall most of the individual scale items both Pre- (coded as “a”) and Post (coded as “b”) tend to have a strong positive relationship to the overall Spirituality Scale (Spirit Sum). This indicates that the items can be treated as an aggregate scale (Spirit Sum). One can also see that the

correlations of the individual Spirituality item scales with overall Spirit Sum scale are stronger for the Post measures. This suggests that the participants relationship of these scale items as a whole was strengthened by the workshop. This again lends support to hypothesis H1, that there will be a positive change in one's Spirituality from Pre- to Post measurement.

▼ Multivariate group=a							
▼ Correlations							
	s_life1*	s_growing1	s_faced1*	spirit1	s_think1*	s_beliefs1*	Spirit_sum
s_life1*	1.0000	0.3553	0.5562	-0.0198	0.5887	0.2901	0.6389
s_growing1	0.3553	1.0000	0.7023	0.3257	0.6104	0.4763	0.7067
s_faced1*	0.5562	0.7023	1.0000	0.4824	0.9479	0.8283	0.9524
spirit1	-0.0198	0.3257	0.4824	1.0000	0.6207	0.6964	0.6129
s_think1*	0.5887	0.6104	0.9479	0.6207	1.0000	0.9138	0.9836
s_beliefs1*	0.2901	0.4763	0.8283	0.6964	0.9138	1.0000	0.8592
Spirit_sum	0.6389	0.7067	0.9524	0.6129	0.9836	0.8592	1.0000
▶ Scatterplot Matrix							
▼ Multivariate group=b							
▼ Correlations							
	s_life1*	s_growing1	s_faced1*	spirit1	s_think1*	s_beliefs1*	Spirit_sum
s_life1*	1.0000	0.8729	0.7223	0.6421	0.6336	0.7395	0.8756
s_growing1	0.8729	1.0000	0.5692	0.7794	0.7157	0.8566	0.8980
s_faced1*	0.7223	0.5692	1.0000	0.6522	0.7537	0.6780	0.8622
spirit1	0.6421	0.7794	0.6522	1.0000	0.5025	0.9519	0.8538
s_think1*	0.6336	0.7157	0.7537	0.5025	1.0000	0.6106	0.8223
s_beliefs1*	0.7395	0.8566	0.6780	0.9519	0.6106	1.0000	0.9115
Spirit_sum	0.8756	0.8980	0.8622	0.8538	0.8223	0.9115	1.0000

Next for the God engagement scale items reading below the diagonal of “1’s”, one can see that the individual scale items of God exists and God awe Pre- (coded as “a”) and Post (coded as “b”) are positively related to overall God sum scale. However, the God wrestle item is weakly correlated to God Sum and the God Judge item is negatively correlated to God sum scale. This indicates that the four God engagements should not be treated as an aggregate scale. These findings also support that these measures do not strongly support hypothesis H2, that there will be a positive change in one's God experience Pre- to Post measurement.

▼ Multivariate group=a					
▼ Correlations					
	God_exist1	God_wrestle1	God_Awe1	God_Judge1	God_sum
God_exist1	1.0000	0.7811	0.8159	0.1954	0.7036
God_wrestle1	0.7811	1.0000	0.7511	0.6891	0.1828
God_Awe1	0.8159	0.7511	1.0000	0.4233	0.6644
God_Judge1	0.1954	0.6891	0.4233	1.0000	-0.3720
God_sum	0.7036	0.1828	0.6644	-0.3720	1.0000
▶ ▼ Scatterplot Matrix					
▼ Multivariate group=b					
▼ Correlations					
	God_exist1	God_wrestle1	God_Awe1	God_Judge1	God_sum
God_exist1	1.0000	0.7471	0.7509	0.2343	0.5595
God_wrestle1	0.7471	1.0000	0.7944	0.5899	0.0552
God_Awe1	0.7509	0.7944	1.0000	0.2899	0.5184
God_Judge1	0.2343	0.5899	0.2899	1.0000	-0.5574
God_sum	0.5595	0.0552	0.5184	-0.5574	1.0000

The God engagement items of God wrestle and God judge were reverse coded to see if this would correct the problem of treating all four items as a God-sum scale seen above. However, this resulted in God-wrestleR being negatively correlated with God_sum scale both pre- and post, while God_JudgeR was found to be positively correlated at a significantly level to the overall scale item in the Post workshop measurements. This later finding is consistent with hypothesis H2, that there will be a positive change in one's God experience Pre- to Post measurement, but probably needs further investigation in the future.

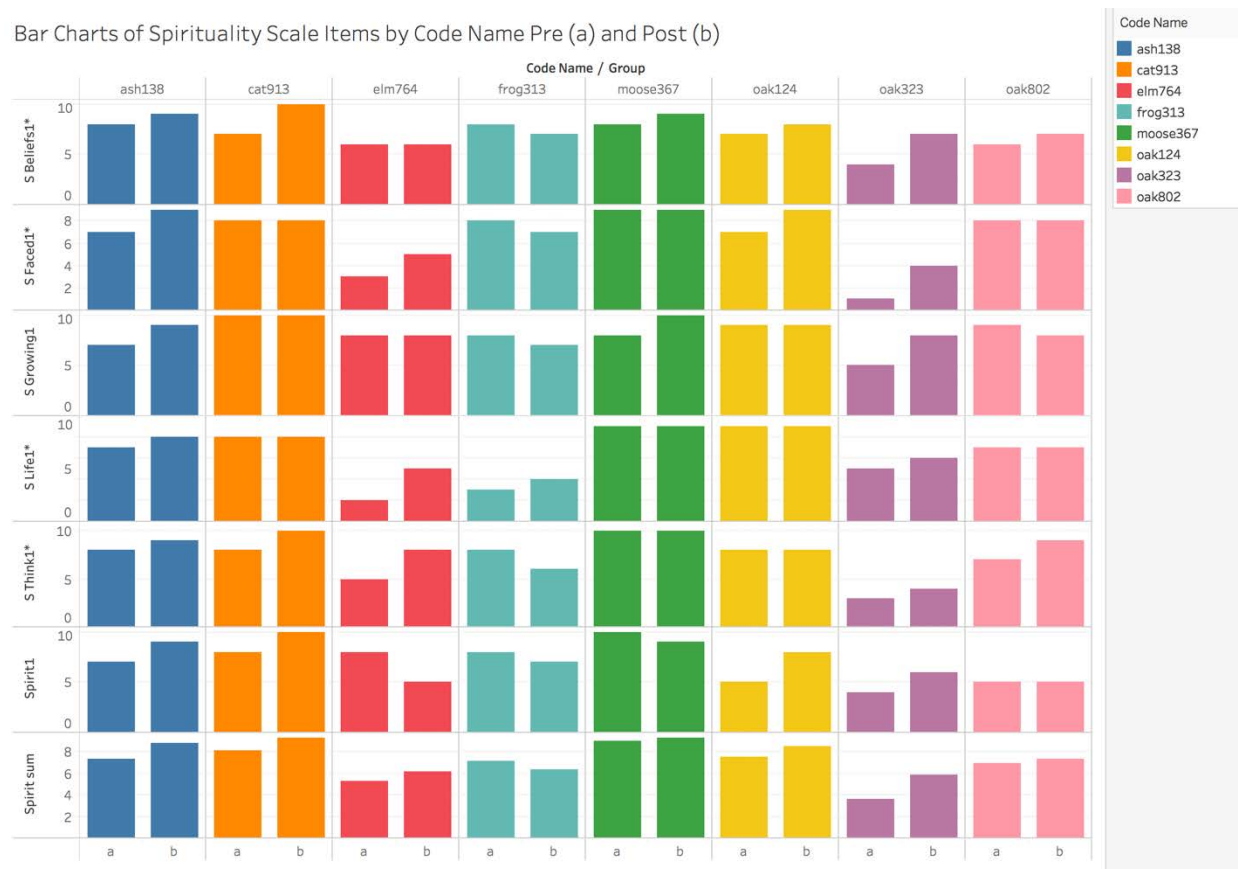
▼	Multivariate group=a
▼	Correlations
	God_exist1 God_wrestleR God_Awe1 God_JudgeR God_sum
God_exist1	1.0000 -0.7811 0.8159 -0.1954 0.7036
God_wrestleR	-0.7811 1.0000 -0.7511 0.6891 -0.1828
God_Awe1	0.8159 -0.7511 1.0000 -0.4233 0.6644
God_JudgeR	-0.1954 0.6891 -0.4233 1.0000 0.3720
God_sum	0.7036 -0.1828 0.6644 0.3720 1.0000
▶	▼ Scatterplot Matrix
▼	Multivariate group=b
▼	Correlations
	God_exist1 God_wrestleR God_Awe1 God_JudgeR God_sum
God_exist1	1.0000 -0.7471 0.7509 -0.2343 0.5595
God_wrestleR	-0.7471 1.0000 -0.7944 0.5899 -0.0552
God_Awe1	0.7509 -0.7944 1.0000 -0.2899 0.5184
God_JudgeR	-0.2343 0.5899 -0.2899 1.0000 0.5574
God_sum	0.5595 -0.0552 0.5184 0.5574 1.0000

If only God_exist and God_awe are taken as items contributing to an overall God engagement scale one can see that these two items have strong positive correlations to this new aggregate God_sum scale both Pre- and Post. However, the correlations are strongest for the Pre- measures, which was not expected. In addition, this finding does not support hypothesis H2, that there will be a positive change in one's God experience Pre- to Post measurement.

▼	Multivariate group=a		
▼	Correlations		
	God_exist1	God_Awe1	God_sum
God_exist1	1.0000	0.8159	0.7036
God_Awe1	0.8159	1.0000	0.6644
God_sum	0.7036	0.6644	1.0000
▶	▼ Scatterplot Matrix		
▼	Multivariate group=b		
▼	Correlations		
	God_exist1	God_Awe1	God_sum
God_exist1	1.0000	0.7509	0.5595
God_Awe1	0.7509	1.0000	0.5184
God_sum	0.5595	0.5184	1.0000

Charts of Scale Item values by Subject. The next set of charts show the evaluation of each individual in the study by code name to the items in the Spirituality Scale and Aggregate Spirit_Sum scale both Pre- (a) and Post (b). The general trend here is for a slight positive increase in scale values from Pre- to Post.

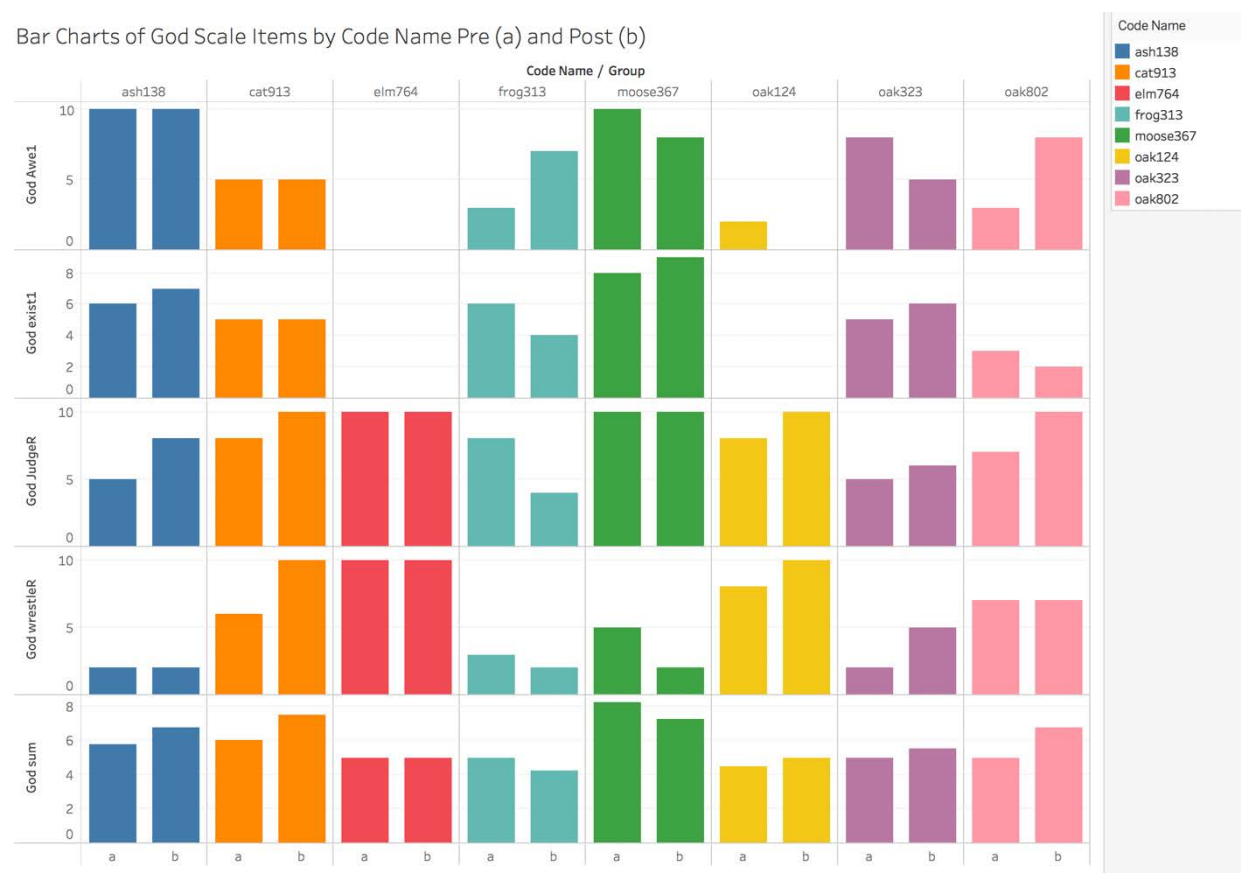
Bar Charts of Spirituality Scale Items by Code Name Pre (a) and Post (b)



The next set of charts shows the evaluation of each individual in the study by code name to the items related to God engagement and Aggregate reverse coded God_Sum scale both Pre (a) and Post (b). Please note that missing bars indicate that the value on that item was zero and that those items in the God engagement scales coded with an “R” at the end of the item name were reverse coded to correct the polarity for hypothesis testing as mentioned earlier.

The general trend here is for a slight positive increase in God engagement scale values both individually and as an aggregate measure from Pre- to Post which had been indicated as an overall trend and presented earlier.

Bar Charts of God Scale Items by Code Name Pre (a) and Post (b)



Overall, the results of this workshop lend support for hypothesis H1, that there will be a positive change in one’s Spirituality from Pre- to Post measurement. However, the results leave in doubt about whether one can claim any support for hypothesis H2, that there will be a positive change in one’s God experience Pre- to Post workshop, as measured in this study. There are a number of implications and takeaways from this workshop that will be discussed next.

Discussion

Power of the test

The number of participants was lower than expected due to a number of possible issues. It was anticipated that only about half of the regular Mussar study group would

attend a workshop of this nature because of their lack of belief in God or that of a Divine presence in the universe. The Rabbi of the regular Mussar study group relayed this information during our discussions about my leading this separate study group.

Another concern that could possibly effect attendance was the possible interaction of one's participation in the intense month of High Holiday services causing one to be reluctant to attend yet another faith related event due to an overwhelming feeling of being satiated on the religious dimension of one's life at the moment.

The final issue with regard to attendance was the chance timing of the workshop during the American Baseball League playoffs between the New York Yankees, a local favorite, and the Houston Astros. This alone caused two who had signed up for the workshop not to attend.

Measurement Issues

The results of the workshop showed that there was a much stronger relationship to one's spirituality across all dimensions measured than to that of one's engagement in God related concerns. This finding that one can have a high level of spirituality without a correspondingly high engagement in God related concerns is worthy of further investigation in the future. There are a number of possible reasons for this including the fact that Judaism in general puts a very high priority on action over directly experiencing God through such things such as prayer, meditation, or reflective wrestling. This general point-of-view can be found in the often cited text of the *Pirkei Avot*, "... as Rabbi Tarfon taught: It is not your responsibility to finish the work [of perfecting the world], but you are not free to desist from it either". This

idea that one has a role to play in perfecting the world is related to the creation story found in the Zohar. The basic story was presented earlier in the literature review as told by Eigen (2012). Briefly again, according some authors of the Kabbalah, in the beginning there was God's presence everywhere known as the *Ein Sof*, an unending presence. In order to create the universe God had to withdraw from being an unending presence. When God contracted God's self, darkness was created. In Genesis 1:3, we find that God then poured light into the world. This primordial light according to the Zohar came into ten holy vessels but the lower vessels shattered leaving humanity to try to restore or to return to wholeness what had become broken. This story is one way to visualizing the human task of perfecting the world. (see also Green 2004)

It is probably noteworthy to recognize that those who come to Reform Judaism are generally a rather diverse group of individuals. Of those in this workshop about half were converts from the Catholic or other Christian faiths. At least two individuals were originally from other Jewish faith traditions namely Modern Orthodox and the Reconstructionist Movement. There is historical precedent for diversity among those who consider themselves to be a Jew dating back to at least the 2nd Century BCE. At that time there were multiple faith traditions among the Jewish people. According to the accounts from Josephus at the time the three most prominent were: 1) the Sadducees who believed that people have total free will and that God was not active in their lives, 2) the Essenes who believed that all of a person's life was predestined by God (fate), and 3) the Pharisees who believed that people have free will but that God also possessed foreknowledge of human destiny (e.g. discussion of early Jewish groups by

VanderKam, in Collins and Harlow ed., 2012, lines 2359 - 2465). It is possible that some of these beliefs about God carry down to us today and were present in the underlying belief structures of the individuals in this workshop.

From a psychological perspective there may be other unexamined factors at work here that could explain some of the complexity in the participants measured God experience based on one's lived experience such as trauma. William James (1902) wrote about God having two families of children on this earth based on the work of Francis Newman (1852, pp. 89, 91), "the once-born and the twice-born (cited in James, 1902, p.67)." The once born do not see God as a strict judge but as one who is kind, merciful, and pure. They seem to have a type of consciousness devoid of crisis (p. 68). The once born believe that whatever evil there is in the world can be dealt with by ignoring it (p.316). While for the twice born there is a belief that there is a real wrongness in the world that cannot be ignored and must be addressed or the sting remains (p. 316). James (1902) talks about taking into account the lives of the twice born the prevalence of tragic death such as freezing, drowning, wild beast, and hideous beast (p. 316). One may recall that these terms are all too similar to those of the *Untaneh Tokef*. It seems reasonable to expect that how one has come to terms with traumatic events in their life would influence how they experience the Divine in their lives. Including measures on one's experience of trauma is certainly something to consider when conducting future studies on a person's God experience. With regard to this Kalsched (2013) relates that:

... the spiritual powers that occupy what Jung called the collective layer of the unconscious generally seem to support psychic integration and wholeness, but without adequate human mediation and relatedness they can turn into their opposite, degenerating into life-threatening defenses that undermine the ego's agency (p. 3).

Key Word Descriptors and Discussed Topics

At the conclusion of the workshop the group was asked what word they would put inside the triangle diagram. The responses included: God, self, community, love, nature, trust, and anger. The words elicited are a reflection of the themes that emerged during pre- and post-*havruta* discussions about faith, spirit, awe and fear. Faith seemed to be most closely connected to God and self, as in faith in oneself. Spirit seemed to be related to community, love, and trust. Love here was discussed in terms on acts of loving kindness or *Chesed* in Hebrew. Nature was most closely related to awe such as events in nature ranging from sunsets to storms, while anger was related to fear and judgement.

It should be noted that the two most discussed topics from the list of ten items (See Appendix C, Havruta issues) during the *havruta* sessions were item #4 (faith not being about "belief" but about knowledge and understanding) and item #6 (The doorway to faith is not opened by rational thought. Only through elevated inner experience can one come to faith or strengthen the faith one has.) from the list which partially explains the words that came top-of-mind in the final group discussion on what word should go in the middle of the poster. On a related note, Eigen (2014) talks about faith being a

vehicle of opening one up to experience and playing with developing a tolerance for experience (line 2325). In many ways, the objective of this workshop through participation in depth dialogues was to open up the participants tolerance for looking at the role of faith in their lives, their experience of God, and the role of engagement in spirit filled action involving acts of loving kindness.

Concluding Thoughts

There were only a few comments received post workshop. The one's found in the post-workshop questionnaire were: 1) fun; 2) thank you, Wynd; 3) loved this, very informative, collective, inspiring and connected. In addition, I received two post-workshop emails regarding doing another session the following week: 1) "Thank you for tonight Wynd. I really enjoyed it and would love another session next week." 2) "Thank you Wynd. I was quite tired last night and I know I missed stuff. I would also like to meet again!" These comments seem to reflect the overall rating the workshop received of 9.5 out of 10. However, only these two individuals were available to do a second session.

I had booked a follow-up session for the next week on the Temple calendar at the time of making the initial request during the spring in case we needed it. The workshop interaction was intensely interactive throughout the session. For example, I had asked the participants to select two topics from the list to discuss during the *havruta* session. After a half hour when it was time to come back together for our closing discussion all of the groups had only had time to discuss one topic. It was for this reason a second session was suggested to them. The workshop was advertised as only

a single session at the rabbi's suggestion based on his experience with getting commitments for multiple session workshops.

My biggest surprise was the fact that the time seemed to speed by for this hour and half workshop which I attribute to the intensity of the interactive discussion generated. There have been many discoveries along the way in the development of this workshop. If I were to point to one that was most meaningful to me it would be the study of Eigen's work on the role of faith in our lives as an analyst with our patients and in our own lives. Simply put, Eigen (2011b) states, "I think that it's good to have faith. And you should always return to that, return to faith (p. 110)." Eigen talked about the need to have patience to let things develop beyond what Bion's called 'Knowing or K' to having 'Faith in O' because it "supports mental exploration, imaginative conjecture, experiential probes (p. 110)" and is "a way of living reality (p.110)" or simply 'being alive now (p. 110)."

This workshop was an initial investigation in to how faith, Spirit, and the experience of God affect the lives of engaged Reform Jews today. Future applications of the findings from this workshop would be to continue this work with more participants and additional measurement questions. One focal area in of need of further investigation is that of the impact of trauma in one's life on the meaning of ancient liturgical religious text in relationship to one's psychic development and one's experiences of God in their life whether they are positive, negative or both.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Workshop Promotions

1. Temple Sinai: Scroll of Living 5778:



Temple Sinai

Building Sacred Connections

SCROLL OF
LIVING

Temple Sinai's Scroll of Living includes all the educational opportunities (youth and adult) you've come to expect and much, much more. Look no further than this booklet for information about classes, activities, guest speakers, special Shabbat and holiday programs, social action programs, and Brotherhood and Sisterhood events. There are experiences offered by some familiar faces as well as some new teachers. This Scroll of Living truly represents a Year in the Life of Temple Sinai and we look forward to having you be a part of it!

PROGRAM OFFERINGS*

A WORKSHOP ON FAITH, SPIRITUALITY, AND AWE

Lead by Wynd Harris, D.Min. candidate HUC-JIR, and
Rabbi Jay TelRav

Wednesday, October 18 at 7:30pm

Have you ever wondered how to live your life aligned with the core value of the Torah: "Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy" – *Leviticus 19:2*

The study of Mussar Middot has been an important vehicle for Jewish self-examination about how to fulfill the commandment to be holy. From time to time different members of Temple Sinai's Mussar study group have raised the issues of faith, spirituality, and God. The purpose of this workshop is to examine these issues with greater depth. We will look at the Middot of Faith to provide a context for individual and collective examination of the relationship. The goal is that our discussions will allow us to look at our own belief(s) or lack of belief(s) and to affirm what has meaning for us and directs our actions.

NO FEE

2. WEEKLY EMAIL TO CONGREGATION ON ADULT ED OFFERINGS

A WORKSHOP ON FAITH, SPIRITUALITY, AND AWE

Led by Wynd Harris, D.Min. candidate HUC-JIR, and
Rabbi Jay TelRav

Wednesday, October 18 at 7:30pm

Have you ever wondered how to live your life aligned with the core value of the Torah: *"Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy"* - Leviticus 19:2

The study of Mussar Middot has been an important vehicle for Jewish self-examination about how to fulfill the commandment to be holy. From time to time different members of Temple Sinai's Mussar study group have raised the issues of faith, spirituality, and God. The purpose of this workshop is to examine these issues with greater depth. We will look at the Middot of Faith to provide a context for individual and collective examination of the relationship. The goal is that our discussions will allow us to look at our own belief(s) or lack of belief(s) and to affirm what has meaning for us and directs our actions. [Click here to register](#). NO FEE

3. Special Workshop Email sent October 9, 2017:



Temple Sinai
Building Sacred Connections
**TEMPLE & COMMUNITY
HAPPENINGS**

ADULT ED OFFERINGS AT TEMPLE SINAI!

A WORKSHOP ON FAITH, SPIRITUALITY, AND AWE
Led by Wynd Harris, D.Min. candidate HUC-JIR, and Rabbi Jay TelRav
Wednesday, October 18 at 7:30pm

Have you ever wondered how to live your life aligned with the core value of the Torah: *"Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy."* - Leviticus 19:2.

The study of Mussar Middot has been an important vehicle for Jewish self-examination about how to fulfill the commandment to be holy. From time to time different members of Temple Sinai's Mussar study group have raised the issues of faith, spirituality, and God. The purpose of this workshop is to examine these issues with greater depth. We will look at the Middot of Faith to provide a context for individual and collective examination of the relationship. The goal is that our discussions will allow us to look at our own belief(s) or lack of belief(s) and to affirm what has meaning for us and directs our actions. [Click here to register](#). NO FEE

Appendix B: Questionnaires

Pre-questionnaire on basic belief: *Intrinsic Spirituality Scale*. (Source: Changes in Spirituality and Well-Being among Victims of Sexual Assault, James E. Kennedy, Robert C. Davis and Bruce G. Taylor, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Jun., 1998), pp. 322-328, Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of [Society for the Scientific Study of Religion](#).)

1. **Pre-questionnaire on basic belief: *Intrinsic Spirituality Scale*** and more. (two-sided document)

This is a confidential survey, as such Do **Not** Put Your Name on It!

In order to compare pre- and post survey information you are asked to write below a name of a tree or animal of 3-6 characters i.e. cat, frog, oak, or pine and a three digit number i.e. 258 (please try to remember what you write):

Name of tree or animal (3-6 letters): _____; three digit number: _____

TABLE 1. *Intrinsic Spirituality Scale* (adapted)

For the following six questions, spirituality is defined as one's relationship to God, or whatever you perceive to be aware of the Ultimate Transcendence.

The questions use a sentence completion format to measure various attributes associated with spirituality. An incomplete sentence fragment is provided, followed directly below by two phrases that are linked to a scale ranging from 0 to 10. The phrases, which complete the sentence fragment, anchor each end of the scale. The 0 to 10 range provides you with a continuum on which to reply, with 0 corresponding to absence or zero amount of the attribute, while 10 corresponds to the maximum amount of the attribute. In other words, the end points represent extreme values, while five corresponds to a medium, or moderate, amount of the attribute. Please circle the number along the continuum that best reflects your initial feeling.

1. In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers:

none of my questions **0** vs. absolutely all my questions **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Growing spiritually is:

of no importance to me **0** vs. more important than anything else

in my life **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. When I am faced with an important decision, my spirituality:

plays absolutely no role **0** vs. is always the overriding consideration **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Spirituality is:

not a part of my life of my life **0** vs. the master motive of my life, directing every other aspect **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. When I think of the things that help me to grow and mature as a person, my spirituality:

has no effect on my personal growth **0** vs. is absolutely the most important factor in my personal growth **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. My spiritual beliefs affect:

no aspect of my life of my life **0** vs. absolutely every aspect **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Beyond spirituality:

7. With regard to God, I have:

no faith that God exists **0** vs. a very strong belief that God exists **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. When I think about God, I:

never wrestle with what I believe **0** vs. very often wrestle with what I believe **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. I find that God is:

is not connected to my experiences of Awe and Spirituality **0** vs. greatly connected to my experiences of Awe and Spirituality **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. I find that fear of God's judgement:

does not influence my behavior **0** vs. has a very significant influence on my behavior **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2, Post_questionnaire on basic belief: *Intrinsic Spirituality Scale* and more. (two-sided document)

This is a confidential survey, as such Do **Not** Put Your Name on It!

In order to compare pre- and post survey information, you are asked to write below the name of a tree or animal of 3-6 characters i.e. cat, frog, oak, or pine and a three-digit number i.e. 258 (please try to remember what you write):

Name of tree or animal (3-6 letters): _____; three digit number: _____

TABLE 1. *Intrinsic Spirituality Scale* (adapted)

1. In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers:

none of my questions **0** vs. absolutely all my questions **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Growing spiritually is:

of no importance to me **0** vs. more important than anything else

in my life **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. When I am faced with an important decision, my spirituality:

plays absolutely no role **0** vs. is always the overriding consideration **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Spirituality is:

not a part of my life of my life **0** vs. the master motive of my life, directing every other aspect **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. When I think of the things that help me to grow and mature as a person, my spirituality:

has no effect on my personal growth **0** vs. is absolutely the most important factor in my

personal growth **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. My spiritual beliefs affect:

no aspect of my life of my life **0** vs. absolutely every aspect **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Beyond spirituality:

7. With regard to God, I have:

no faith that God exists **0** vs. a very strong belief that God exists **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. When I think about God, I:

never wrestle with what I believe **0** vs. very often wrestle with what I believe **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. I find that God is:

is not connected to my experiences of Awe and Spirituality **0** vs. greatly connected to my experiences of Awe and Spirituality **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. I find that fear of God's judgement:

does not influence my behavior **0** vs. has a very significant influence on my behavior **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. I find that the rabbi talks too much about God from the Bimah?

Strongly disagree **0** vs. strongly agree **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. I found this workshop very useful in helping me to reflect of faith, spirituality, and awe:

Strongly disagree **0** vs. strongly agree **10**:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Additional Comments:

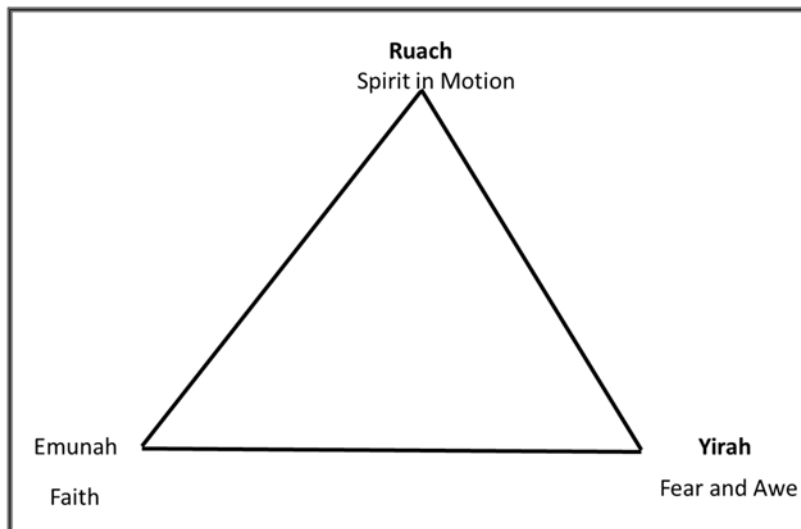
Appendix C: Workshop Handouts

Workshop Setup and Poster.

The following is a picture of the workshop setup.



This is an enlargement of the poster shown above:



Havruta issues (a two page handout).

The body needs air. What is the air of the soul? Faith. —Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian.

1. Rav Kook, who was the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel, said it is heretical, taking as an example of faith the conviction that the Torah is of divine origin: "A person may believe that the Torah is from heaven, but his understanding of heaven may be so skewed that it allows for not a shred of true faith."
2. it says in the "Song at the Sea," which has been incorporated into the liturgy: "On that day *HaShem* saved Israel from the hand of Egypt, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore . . . and they had faith in *HaShem* and in Moses, His servant." That faith was strengthened by the revelation experienced at Mount

Sinai. And then it crashed into the Golden Calf. Here we have faith, in its strength and its fragility.

3. Faith must be a central concern of anyone who seeks the goals toward which Mussar directs. The target for a life well lived is summed up in the word wholeness (*sh'lemut*), about which Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe says: "We seek only our wholeness." Then he guides, "The foundation of wholeness is faith." Without faith, wholeness will elude us.
4. The Rambam conceives of faith not being about "belief" but about knowledge and understanding, and this seems right to me says Alan Morinis. Rabbi Perr once said to Alan, "Everybody has faith, but only some people know it." How does one come to know his or her faith?
5. Rav Kook cautions us to remember that these flashes—glimpses from behind, so to speak which Moses only got of God—are all we get to see, and that the trouble with faith starts to arise when we impose images and language onto these perceptions: One must always cleanse one's thoughts about God to make sure they are free of the dross of deceptive fantasies, of groundless fear, of evil inclinations, of wants and deficiencies ... All the divine names, whether in Hebrew or in any other language, give us only a tiny and dull spark of the hidden light to which the soul aspires when it utters the word "God." Every definition of God

brings about heresy, every definition is spiritual idolatry; even attributing to Him intellect and will, even the term divine, the term God, suffers from the limitations of definition. Except for the keen awareness that all these are but sparkling flashes of what cannot be defined—these, too, would engender heresy.

6. Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian teaches, the problem about belief in God is that it just doesn't work to approach God through rational thought: "All philosophical speculations and explanations, even if true, can in no fashion bring man to cling to the living God." The doorway to faith is not opened by rational thought. Only through elevated inner experience can one come to faith or strengthen the faith one has. Through reflection and learning, you may be convinced that there must be more to life than is apparent, but it is only through lived experience that this notion becomes implanted as faith.
7. The Mussar teachers stress one sort of emotional experience in particular as effective in underpinning faith, and that is awe. Awe is one of the translations of the Hebrew word *yirah*.
8. Rabbi Wolpe found that part of what kept him away from God was the assumption that he knew what religion was. He began to ask himself and others these questions about faith;

- a. Do you believe only that which is tangible – that which you can see or touch or measure – is real, or do you believe there is an intangible reality?
- b. Do you believe that there is a mystery at the heart of the universe that we will never be able to fully understand, not through lack of effort because it cannot be understood?

Wolpe found that each day of his life:

... is touched by experiences that have nothing to do with proof. The music of my daughter's laugh, the thrill of reading a profound thought, a quiet moment at home with my wife. Who can prove that these are important? Who would wish to prove it? The deepest experiences of life are not the fruit of reason but of love.

9. David Whyte wrestling with his own notion of faith wrote this poem

FAITH I want to write about faith,
about the way the moon rises over cold snow,
night after night, faithful even as it fades from fullness,
slowly becoming that last curving and impossible sliver of light before the final
darkness.

But I have no faith myself I refuse it even the smallest entry.

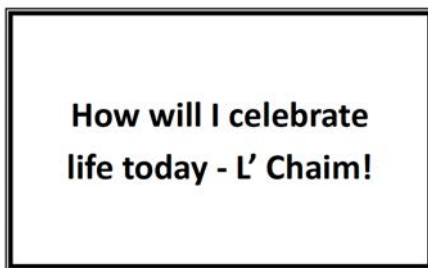
Let this then, my small poem, like a new moon, slender and barely open,
be the first prayer that opens me to faith.

10. Rabbi David A. Teutsch said about the *Untaneh Tokef*:

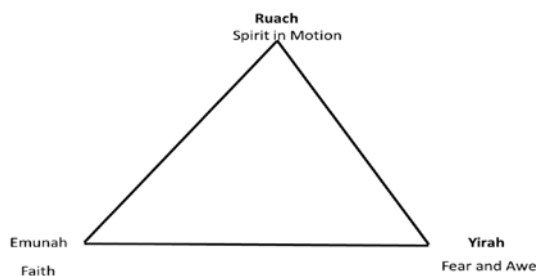
I cannot control the unexpected blows that will affect my family, my job, my health. But I can control how I live with them. *T'shuvah* (cultivating a spiritual life and returning to Torah), *t'filah* (cultivating gratitude and connecting with transcendent values), and *tzedakah* (cultivating generosity and pursuing justice) will mitigate the bad in the decree. *T'shuvah*, *t'filah*, and *tzedakah* will not stop stock-market crashes, lung cancer, or the other blows that come our way, but they can radically transform how we are affected by those blows.

Cards for reflection after the workshop.

Front of the card:



Back of the card:



Appendix D: Excerpts from Literature Review

The other two ways of sensing God's Holiness:

How Do We Sense God's Holiness? Through Honor:

And so, in Your holiness, give Your people the gift of honor.

Bless with praise those who praise You.

Bless with hope those who seek You.

Give Your believers a basis for **faith**: true happiness for the Land of Israel, true joy in Jerusalem. May the sparks of David, Your servant,

soon grow bright enough for us to see

a beam of light in the darkness,

a promise of perfection. (cited in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah*, 2015, p. 314)

How Do We Sense God's Holiness? Through Righteousness:

And so, in Your holiness,

give the righteous the gift of a vision bright with joy:

a world where evil has no voice

and the rule of malevolence fades like wisps of smoke.

Good people everywhere will celebrate

the stunning sight of arrogance gone from the earth. (cite in *Mishkan HaNefesh: Rosh HaShanah*, 2015, p. 315):

Additional note on the idea of Spirit

Note that the phrase “KNOW BEFORE WHOM YOU STAND” from *The Talmud* (B’rachot 28b) states: “When you pray, know before whom you stand.” This phrase, often inscribed above the aron kodesh (the ark in which the sacred Torah scrolls are kept), summons the worshiper to a reverent and focused attention in the presence of the holy. It may be related to Exodus 3:5, in which Moses is told to remove his sandals because “the ground on which you stand is holy.”

WHO STRUGGLED TO BE HUMAN. Based on Pirkei Avot 2:5: “Hillel taught:...

In a place where there are no human beings, strive to be human.”

TO DO JUSTICE... WALK HUMBLLY. See Micah 6:8.

THE DAY IS SHORT. Adapted from Pirkei Avot 2:20: “Rabbi Tarfon used to say: The day is short, the task is great, the laborers are lazy, the reward is abundant, and the Master is urgent.” (cited in Mishkan HaNefesh: Yom Kippur, 2015, p.436)