

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF HOW ORTHODOX JEWS EXPERIENCE
SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOSITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MARRIAGE

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by

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF HOW ORTHODOX JEWS EXPERIENCE
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This qualitative phenomenological study explored the interaction between the constructs of spirituality and religiosity of Orthodox Judaism with marriage. Eight participants were selected to be interviewed for this study. All of the participants were from the Greater Cleveland area and considered themselves to be members of the Orthodox Jewish faith.

The interviews were conducted using the responsive interviewing method, allowing for the participants to offer data in expected and unexpected areas of interest. From these interviews, the data was analyzed using a four step process and organized into four major themes: (a) the experience of Orthodox Judaism enhances marriage, (b) marriage enhances the experience of Orthodox Judaism, (c) the experience of Orthodox Judaism detracts from marriage, and (d) marriage detracts from the experience of Orthodox Judaism. These themes were each supported by two or more sub-themes that detailed specific ways each of the themes is substantiated from the interview data. Additionally, two minor themes were found: (a) the community's role in the Orthodox Jewish experience of marriage, and (b) differing roles and foci of marriage partners in Orthodox Judaism.

This study revealed that Orthodox Judaism interacts with marriage in a bidirectional manner, with these constructs enhancing each other in various ways and detracting from each other as well. Further research might look at how these constructs interact in those of various faiths, sampling from more specific populations within Orthodox Judaism, and use of a more anonymous methodology to gather data.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The profession of counseling continues to gather increasing amounts of data, studies, and information in a diverse number of areas that continue to affect how counselors conceptualize and treat clients. Some of these areas include the influence a client's religion or spirituality plays in one's life. In the past, many attempts were made to operationally define religion and spirituality, and while there has not yet emerged a single accepted definition, the literature has created awareness of the difficulties involved in putting such a personal and broad concept into a single box (Larson, 1989).

This research expanded on previous studies by focusing specifically on religion and spirituality in the Orthodox Jewish tradition. One of the questions looked at in this research was, how does an individual's interpretation of religion and spirituality within the Orthodox Jewish tradition affect one's experience of marriage. To begin to explore spirituality and religion from the Orthodox Jewish perspective, it is helpful to have understanding of the differences between Orthodox Jewish practice and tradition compared to other branches of Judaism. While there may be more similarities than differences between the branches, the differences should be reviewed as well because they may present a unique strength, challenge, or perspective for this research (Goodman, 2002).

While religion and spirituality are a significant part of the makeup of a person, relationships are another core component. There are many important relationships one can look at when learning about a person that may lend themselves to an increased

understanding of the person. The marriage relationship has been richly studied in a variety of contexts (Robinson, 1994). This research sought to gain a new perspective on marriage and from marriage by looking at it in the context of spirituality and religion.

While marriage is a societal construct, it is also a religious or spiritual construct (Call & Heaton, 1997). The primary questions encountered within this research are: (a) How does a person's marriage affect their self-perceived notion of being an Orthodox Jew? (b) How does the self-perceived notion of being an Orthodox Jew affect one's marriage?

Purpose of the Study

This study was a qualitative, phenomenological study meant to explore how spirituality and religiosity affect marriage in Orthodox Jewish couples. The goal was to look at the subjects' unique experiences of their reality to find the essence of those experiences, while at the same time not allowing the focus to gather around generalizations or interpretations (Moustakas, 1994). The experience of both spirituality and religiosity are unique within every religion or ethnicity. Even within the Jewish religion, there are different branches to which these words mean different things (Goodman, 2002). While both spirituality and religiosity have been looked at by a number of researchers in most of the major religions (Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003; Ingersoll, 1994), including Judaism (Goodman, 2002), this research focused on how religiosity and spirituality affect Orthodox Jewish couples, a topic for which little research exists. As much of the research has shown, it can be challenging to define spirituality or religiosity in a succinct, broadly accepted manner, even within a specific religion or ethnicity, because one's experience of these concepts is a matter close to one's

heart or spirit (Pargament, 2002). The subjectivity is often a defining feature of these terms. The present research pursued a working definition of spirituality and religiosity that matched the outlook of the greater majority of Orthodox Jews. At the same time, it left room for individuals to explore and define their own versions of both of these concepts.

This being a qualitative study, there was no null hypothesis to support or reject. Rather, the goal was to allow the data to speak for itself and to allow new concepts or ideas worthy of exploration within this topic to come to the surface (Merriam, 2009). A further and deeper understanding of how these concepts interact will allow counselors to have a better command of these specific issues for a client. Likewise for clients, while religiosity and spirituality may be concepts often close to the forefront of awareness, it may be helpful to explore how these interact within one's marriage relationship.

The search for a life partner is to many a central theme and focus running through one's life. The same can be said for the search for spirituality or the practice of spiritual beliefs. A person's spiritual and religious beliefs have a significant impact on not only one's mental well-being, but on one's physical well-being as well (Kass, Friedman, Leserman, Zuttmeister, & Benson, 1991). Interestingly, the same can be said for marriage (Fincham, Beach, & Kemp-Fincham, 1997; Halford, Kelly, & Markam, 1997). One does not have to look far within Western culture to encounter the popularity of marriage. Nine out of ten Americans will marry at least once in their life (Olson, 1990).

These two paths are often woven together for many couples, where the pursuit of spirituality and religiosity, as well as the search for the happiness and companionship

found in an intimate relationship are strongly connected. For many couples, the process of spiritual growth with a partner is in itself a spiritual path (Levine & Levine, 1995). Hendrix (2010) spoke of making one's marriage into a conscious relationship by allowing the deep spiritual needs of each partner to emerge. This creates a closeness even greater than before because of the creation of a deeper bond as a function of conscious sharing and joint growth.

There is a strong need for increased understanding of issues of spirituality and religiosity within the context of a marriage relationship (Call & Heaton, 1997). For counselors to effectively work with couples dealing with these issues, a strong knowledge and background of spirituality, religiosity and their possible effects is necessary. Kayser (1993) noted that when experiencing difficulty, partners in a marriage will often not come at first to a counselor or other mental health professional, but to a member of the clergy or a primary care physician. In fact, many considering therapy prefer someone that has their own set of spiritual values and beliefs to be better able to help the couple integrate their beliefs into the issues discussed in counseling (Stewart & Gale, 1994).

Relationship to Counseling

This topic is relevant to the field of counseling as demonstrated in a number of areas. Religion and spirituality play a significant role in many clients' lives (Ingersoll, 1994). Further understanding of these roles will give greater ability to counselors to understand their clients and thereby enable those clients to navigate existential and practical issues related to adapting life to one's religion or spirituality. There has been relatively little research done on the Orthodox Jewish population (Schnall, 2006).

Increased understanding through study will open this often insular world, leading to better service not only to this population, but to other traditions that differ from the predominant religions or forms of spirituality.

In a similar vein, increased understanding of the little studied area of marriage among Orthodox Jews will increase our understanding of marriage in general by adding data to the already existing body of research that defines marriage. This research led to increased cultural awareness and sensitivity that may be used when counseling clients from the Orthodox Jewish faith. This research may also be a stepping off point for further research into marriage of other narrowly defined cultural groups.

The multicultural constructs explored in this study will likely have some similarities to other cultures, but also have unique and distinct aspects. For a counselor to attempt to counsel any client without proper understanding of the intricacies of these constructs may potentially impact the counselor/client relationship in a negative fashion (Schnall, 2006). This lack of understanding or confusion will certainly not increase the therapeutic impact of the relationship. If a counselor is armed with the subtle and detailed knowledge of multicultural constructs, such as spirituality for Orthodox Jews, a counselor is more likely to deeply explore these constructs within therapy in a more meaningful way (Langmann, 1999).

One of the key areas that this research sought to expand was understanding the interaction between the constructs of religion, spirituality, and marriage. While each of these has been studied many times before, they are less frequently studied together, as one affecting the other. However, there is reason to believe that there would be a high

level of interaction in these areas as they are both prominent features for many in their daily lives. It would be impossible for there to be no overlap, or interaction (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2008), and likely for there to be a great deal of interaction. The way this interaction happens specifically in the Orthodox Jewish tradition adds to the existing, though limited, literature of other religions and spiritualities.

Literature Review

Essential to understanding how Orthodox Jews experience religiosity and spirituality in marriage, each distinct part must be analyzed independently. This study touched upon many different areas of research, but only the most directly relevant areas were included in the review of the literature. The general structure of this review is as follows. Both of the terms spirituality and religiosity are broad. Therefore, both terms were looked at in light of past research, to hone in on a working definition to use for the purpose of this study. Having gathered a clear sense of spirituality and religiosity in general, the review moved on to look at another term essential to the research question, namely, the definition of a Jew. While Jews have their own unique identity, it was helpful to look at research dealing with the formation of cultural identity. After looking at the term cultural identity, the review applied that thought specifically to Jewish identity.

At the same time, the review also had to look at the definition of a Jew outside of the cultural identification of being a Jew. This is distinct from being Jewish culturally, as it pertains to the way a Jew is defined in Jewish religious law. Because this research

focused on one specific branch of Judaism, the review first looked at the three main branches of Judaism and their distinctions from each other, to lend further understanding as to why this research is specifically focused on the Orthodox branch.

The remainder of the review focused on the relationship being explored within this study, marriage. Because marriage is such a broad topic, the review focused specifically on the marriage relationship in the context of religion and spirituality. This included both distal and proximal approaches to studying religion and marriage.

Included in the review of religion and marriage were subtopics, such as religious community and marriage, the interplay of religion and sexuality and marriage, and marital satisfaction specific to religious couples.

Spirituality and Religion

When looking at the way spirituality and religion influence marriage it is helpful to look at the source of these spiritual beliefs. The development of spirituality and religion are like other areas of human development in that they begin in childhood, as early as birth. The family of origin is usually the most important and primary source of socialization mechanisms for beliefs (Durkheim, 1961). Not surprisingly, individuals that self identify as being religious are more likely to have parents that are religious (Dollahite & Thatcher, 2008). The ways the particular and general beliefs become transferred to the child are not yet fully explored in the research, but it nonetheless remains clear that the family is a strong influence. Therefore, when looking at the formation of an intimate relationship, it is likely that this new socialization process will

also not only be affected by the spirituality and religiosity of the partners, but also affect the spirituality and religiosity of the couple.

Since the formation of spirituality most often begins before marriage, it is initially useful to explore how individuals may have used their spirituality or religiosity to guide their decisions in choosing a marriage partner as well as to define the relationship.

Spiritual and religious beliefs are used by many individuals to influence the way they feel about and interact with the world (Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003). Mahoney et al. (2001) found that individuals will use spiritual beliefs to influence choice of romantic partner and outlook within romantic relationships.

Definition of Spirituality

When looking at the research, the terms religion and spirituality have no hard and fast definition agreed upon by all. Ellison (1983) felt that one of the reasons for this lack of definition is because of the confusion of spirituality and religiosity, as well as the concern for maintaining a separation between church and state in federally funded institutions. Often, when researchers did attempt to describe spirituality, they only offered a generalization (Ellis, 1992). This research first looked at the term spirituality and how others have defined it in order to have a better understanding of the term's meaning.

Pargament (1999) said that spirituality can be understood as one searching for what is or will be sacred in one's life. One seeks to first discover what is sacred and then attach oneself to the sacred, making it an important area of one's life. The sacred refers to special objects, events, or ideas set apart from the ordinary. It also includes concepts

such as God, transcendent reality, and the divine (Hill & Pargament, 2008). Booth (1992) said that spirituality is an "inner attitude that emphasizes energy, creative choice, and a powerful force for living." He also said that it involves being a partner with a power greater than the individual. Magill and McGreal (1988) spoke of spirituality as encompassing everything that is involved in one's journey toward union with the divine.

As Richards and Bergin (1997) pointed out in their research, a method for studying spirituality in an empirical fashion would be more useful than another definition. When a concept has no clearly agreed upon definition, gathering data and then running the factor analysis of that concept is a useful method for distilling a definition. This is what Ingersoll (1994) did through his spiritual wellness inventory. His research led him to find seven factors, or dimensions of spirituality. These dimensions are: (a) meaning, (b) conception of divinity, (c) relationship, (d) mystery, (e) experience, (f) play, and (g) an integrative dimension.

Ingersoll (1994) looked at the term "meaning" as an expression of what an individual experiences to make life worth living (Frankl, 1948). Drawing further from Frankl's concept of meaning, it includes a will to meaning defined as an individual's search for the ultimate meaning in life.

In the second dimension, "conception of divinity," Ingersoll pointed out that an individual's conceptualization of divinity can be as diverse as the number of individuals there are. A more finite way to categorize conception of divinity may be to look at how Fox (1983) defined four encompassing categories. These include theistic, atheistic, pantheistic, and panentheistic. The term theistic refers to an individual relating to a

transcendent force or being in some fashion, while the term atheist refers to those that refute or resist any conception of that transcendent force or being. According to Fox, pantheistic refers to the relationship of the individual with a higher power in a way that the power resides in everything including the individual. Finally, the panentheistic relationship refers to the higher power residing in the individual in all things and paradoxically transcending all things. This transcendence is what allows the individual's relationship to not be limited by the self.

In the third dimension, Ingersoll (1994) defined the term "relationship" in this context as encompassing "how individuals relate to their conception of divinity (if any) and to others." Another way to look at the concept of relationship within the context of spirituality is one searching for connectedness between the self, others, and a higher power (Burns, 1989). This is likely to occur when one goes through an experience that requires growth or some sort of change involving a certain level of depth (Ingersoll, 1994).

In the fourth dimension, "mystery" refers to the unknown or ambiguous aspect of spirituality and how an individual relates to it. This aspect of the definition of spirituality as being part mystery also speaks to why it is so difficult to operationalize. The term one person might use to describe a transcendent or spiritual experience may be the same or different from what another person might use. However, both can be described as attempting to use words to describe an unknown or indefinable experience that words cannot encompass (Ingersoll, 1994).

The fifth dimension outlined by Ingersoll (1994) is that of “experience.” The concept of spiritual experience draws from the previous four dimensions. Once one has a sense of meaning, a conception of divinity, a relationship with divinity, and a sense of mystery surrounding the higher power and its integration into the world, an individual is looking for how these appear within one's experience. Spirituality very much relates to an increased experience of being alive and is found at the core of many peak human experiences (Moberg, 1971). In fact, according to Maslow (1970), it is often spiritual elements within these peak experiences that have a significant influence on the search for meaning and conception of value within the secular.

Ingersoll (1994) further noted that the concept of spiritual experience extends not only to peak experiences and the non-ordinary, but also to the infusion of spiritual meaning within everyday experiences. The dimension of “play” focuses on the idea of giving oneself over to something greater or losing oneself within an experience. It is the idea of focusing less on purpose and more on the meaning within the experience itself. “Play” is what helps one find the balance between the work and seriousness of spirituality, on the one hand, and the lack of control or spontaneity, on the other. The final dimension Ingersoll (1994) noted is that of spirituality as a systemic force that works to integrate the previously mentioned spiritual dimensions within a person's life.

Spirituality and the Family of Origin

The family of origin, where one was raised, is usually a person's first introduction to spirituality and religion and therefore plays an important role in shaping a person's spiritual and religious development (Flor & Knapp, 2001). Fiese and Tomcho (2001)

saw the transmission of spirituality and religion moving from one generation to the next through a number of methods. These would include the use of stories of spirituality in previous generations within the family as well as outside of the family. Similarly, the spoken and unspoken rules within the family play an essential role in transmitting a sense of continuance and importance as a link to practices developed from generations past (Goodman & Dollahite, 2004).

Hardly a straightforward process, the transmission of beliefs, values, and practices surrounding spirituality and religion is a complex process where outside influences affect the way family of origin beliefs are integrated into the development of the individual (Flor & Knapp, 2001). Modeling is one of the key components of passing on religious values to a developing child. Research suggests that the religious behavior of a parent or parents significantly affects the religious behavior of a child (Fowler & Andrews, 1981). Similarly, the desire of parents for the child to be religious, as well as having open conversations about faith, spirituality, and religion in the home foster a sense of importance surrounding spirituality and religion (Flor & Knapp, 2001).

Definition of Religion

For the purpose of this research it was helpful to further discuss how past research has looked at the term religion or religiosity, and more specifically, how religion distinguishes itself from spirituality. In fact, for many researchers there is little distinction between the two terms and they are often used interchangeably (Standard, Sandhu, & Painter, 2000).

In a study involving multiple religions and multiple age groups, Fowler (1981) explored the formation and practice of religious identity. He defines it as “an orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one’s hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions” (p. 14). Marty and Appleby (1991) identified religion as being part of a person’s identity that consist of specific rituals, customs, beliefs, ceremonies, and symbols unique to that religion. Similarly, Helminiak (2001) called religion a set of doctrines, ethical codes, practices, rituals, texts, and traditions. While the terms used to describe religion are different, they share a theme of being specific, and sometimes tangible, ways that a person or group can concentrate on orienting towards a larger focus.

Other researchers have looked at religiosity as being operationally defined in various other ways. Francis (1992) maintained that it is connected to one's frequency of religious service attendance. Since religion is something most frequently practiced as a group, one's participation in that group defines one's level of religiosity. Others posited that it is a more value based idea, being the importance of religion in one's life (Dunn, 2005). This broadens the idea to express religion in multiple areas of life, not just in ritual observance. Lowenthal et al. (2003) defined religiosity as being one's frequency of prayer. They looked at prayer as being the central expression of religiosity and therefore one's frequency of prayer expresses one's level of religiosity.

Sarason (1993) posited that religion is very much a community based activity. The community that builds around a religion serves the function of giving meaning to practices and rituals outside of oneself. Having a sense of belonging to a community can be a source comfort during difficult times. This can be seen in the large role a religious

community often plays during times of transition, such as a birth, death, etc. (Helminiak, 2001). Often people are looking for a sense of guidance or normalcy in times of great emotional transition and uncertainty. Religion in the context of community fills this role as a structure or foundation on which one can rely (Wells, 1995).

It is not difficult to look at the definitions and descriptions of religion and easily adapt or translate them for Judaism. For example the community experience is important within Judaism, often centering around life experiences that are common irrespective of religion, such as birth and death. Of course Judaism has its own meaning for these experiences as well as specific traditions tied to these events. Likewise with other aspects of religion, Judaism shares some features, rejects others, and adds in areas not considered elsewhere.

Judaism

In order to look at what it means to be a member of the Jewish faith or have a Jewish identity, this study first examined what it means to belong to a particular group in general or have a cultural identity. Cultural identity can be defined as the “psychological relationship of cultural and racial minority group members with their own group” (Phinney, 1990, p. 499). There are three components that may help to understand cultural identity: (a) cultural values and behaviors, (b) group membership, and (c) minority status experiences (Phinney, 1990). While it is possible to not be a member of a minority group and still have a cultural identity, it is more often the case that minority status is a significant factor in cultural identity, according to Phinney. Ethnic identity may be defined as members of a group that share particular values or attributes, distinct from

other groups (Herman, 1977). Another way to define ethnic identity is "a group classification of individuals who share a unique social and cultural heritage (customs, language, religion, and so on) passed on from generation to generation" (Casas, 1984, p. 787).

Race is a particularly broad way to classify people. When looking at race as a way to distinguish Jews from other cultural or ethnic groups, Jews are often classified as White (Herman, 1989). However, while the majority of Jews are White, Jews can be of any race. Around the world, one will find Black, Asian, and Hispanic Jews. Therefore, race is not an accurate way to distinguish Jews from other groups. Thus, in this research, Jewish identity or ethnicity will not consider race. As Phinney (1992) points out, when looking at how previous studies have defined ethnic identity, the significant factors have included language, religious affiliation, cultural practices, traditions, and social connectedness.

Definition of a Jew

After discussing what it means to be a member of a larger group, it was relevant to mention how one becomes a Jew. The vast majority of Jews are born as Jews (Himmelfarb, 1980). According to *Halacha* (religious law), one is automatically a Jew if one is born to a Jewish mother. There is never a discussion of one being half Jewish, a quarter Jewish, or any other part of being Jewish (Weiner, 2007). As long as one's mother is Jewish, one is completely Jewish. One can also convert to Judaism through a formal religious practice. There are specific guidelines and practices that have to be

followed to become a convert and it must be done before a court of Jewish law (*Beis Din*). Once one is a Jew, there is nothing that one can do to not be a Jew (Herman, 1989).

This is all true according to Jewish religious practice. However, with increasing rates of intermarriage around the world, there are many people that fall outside of the above definition that may consider themselves Jewish (Himmelfarb, 1980). According to the Conservative and Reform branches of Judaism, having either a Jewish mother or father is sufficient to define one as a Jew. Additionally, the conversion process for Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews is different. While Conservative and Reform Jews will accept and recognize Jews converted in an Orthodox Jewish court, the reverse is not the case. Jews converted by a Conservative or Reform Jewish court will still not be considered Jewish according to Orthodox Judaism (Goldstein & Goldscheider, 1968).

While controversy exists as to the definition of a Jew, for the purpose of this research, the definition of a Jew followed Orthodox Jewish practice. Since the research focused on members of the Orthodox Jewish population, members of this group consider another an Orthodox Jew if one's mother is Jewish or one underwent an Orthodox conversion.

Jewish Identity

While Jews comprise only 0.02% of the world's population (Weinfeld, 2001), there is still a large spectrum of differences between branches of Judaism. Almost one third of American Jewish adults identify as secular, atheist, agnostic, humanist, or having no religion (Keysar, 2009). For some Jews the identity is largely cultural, while for others it is inherently tied to religious practice (Haji, Lalonde, Durbin, & Naveh-

Benjamin, 2010). Even within religious practice, there are varying levels of practice that place Jews in different categories. As Phinney (1992) pointed out, many people may identify as being members of the same group. However, the amount of attachment they feel towards that group, their participation in the ethnic and cultural heritage of the group, and their knowledge of the ethnicity or culture can vary greatly. This is important to keep in mind as far as it affects this research.

Himmelfarb (1980) looked at previous research in the area of Jewish identification and found seven common dimensions. These dimensions are:

1. Ritual behavior
2. Formal organizational participation
3. Informal social ties with other Jews
4. Attitudes towards Israel
5. Doctrinal belief
6. Intellectual dimensions
7. A form of giving charity

Tying these dimensions to the idea of differing personal views of being a Jew, one person may focus very strongly on one or two of the above dimensions, while another may focus on a different dimension. Because many Jews focus on some, but not all, of the above dimensions, there is a perceived decline in Jewish identification. As well, there is significant concern about the decline of Jewish identification due to an increased distance from earlier generations (Goldstein & Goldscheider, 1968). For this reason, many Jews develop strong feelings about the State of Israel and it being a home to the

Jewish people to provide a sense of connection to the past. Their identity as Jews is very connected to this attitude or belief. Such a Jew will attend discussions and rallies for Israel, donate money to charities and organizations that are dedicated to furthering Judaism and Jewish life in Israel, and associate with others of similar opinions. On the other hand, for another Jew the focus of being a Jew may surround ritual, attending synagogue every day, and praying with a quorum of other Jews. Adhering to certain rituals leads to an increase in Jewish identification (Sklare and Greenblum, 1967). This connects one formally and informally to other Jews, lending strongly to this person's identity as a Jew.

Bock (1976) found that an individual's level of Jewish identification is strongly correlated to the level of Jewish identification of one's parents. In a family, one observes the attitude toward and level of ritual practice held by one's parents, and this becomes the foundation for a child's identification as a Jew. Looking again at Himmelfarb's (1980) seven dimensions, having a strong or weak level of practice in any of the dimensions of being a Jew, is likely to affect the upbringing of the children in the family. Some of the activities that may influence a person's developing Jewish identification include practicing Jewish traditions together as a family, having a Shabbos (Sabbath) meal together, or attending a Jewish day school or Hebrew school. Of course this does not mean that the direction of influence is always the same. Many choose to increase or decrease the level of practice, belief, or participation from what was observed in their family of origin (Himmelfarb, 1980).

While the term “Jewish” refers to a particular culture or ethnicity, it also refers to a religion (Schnoor, 2002). The religious aspects of being Jewish vary greatly across members, but it is impossible to separate the religious dimensions from the ethnic or cultural dimensions. This is because the ethnic and cultural traditions are able to be traced back to a way of life or practice centered around religious practice. While some Jews may be closely tied to ritual and actively work at performing these traditions, others may pay little attention to tradition and identify with the more cultural aspects of being Jewish (Bock, 1976).

Sinclair and Milner (2005) suggested that not only is Jewish identity connected to religious belief, but also to attachment and involvement within the Jewish community. The community provides a structure and foundation, a sense of belonging and family. Langman (1995) pointed out that "being Jewish, however, means more than belonging to a religion. Jews have been called a religious group, a people, an ethnicity, a culture, and a civilization (p. 228)." It can be said that each Jew has an individual and personal culture within Judaism (Herman, 1989). This relates to one's level of commitment to practice, traditions passed down from previous generations, interest in Jewish culture, and involvement in the greater Jewish community. Some Jews look at themselves as primarily ethnic while others have a strong connection to Judaism through their support of Israel. Additionally, each Jew brings one's own family history, personality, and personal values to one's religious experience. It is the combination of these particulars, and more, that creates a person's unique culture as a Jew (Goldstein & Goldscheider, 1968).

Branches of Judaism

At the same time, outside of secular Jews that do not identify with a particular group, there are three major groups of Jews. These group's values will shape each member's outlook and practice of Judaism. These groups include: (a) Orthodox, (b) Conservative, and (c) Reform (Schnall, 2006).

According to Langman (1999), the term Orthodox was first introduced in response to the rise of the Reform movement. It was used to differentiate those practicing Judaism according to the strict interpretation of the Torah (Jewish law in the five books of Moses) from those following the tenets of the Reform movement.

Orthodoxy believes in the divine origin of the Torah and that adherence to its laws and tenets are paramount to faithfully transmitting the tradition to future generations. At the same time, room is given to Rabbinical authorities to operate within the structure of divine Jewish law to adapt when necessary (Herman, 1989).

A recent survey looked at how the current Jewish population in the United States falls into the three branches of Judaism. The survey found that 44% of Jews consider themselves unaffiliated. This was defined as not identifying with any of the particular branches of Judaism. The remaining Jewish population in the survey identified themselves as follows: 39% identified as Reform, 33% identified as Conservative, and 21% identified as Orthodox (National Jewish Population Survey, 2001).

Much of the difference between the branches of Judaism revolves around the interpretation of the right of Rabbinic authority to change Jewish law and practice (Schnall, 2006). While a full discussion of the views held by the three branches of

Judaism is outside the scope of this research, generally, Orthodox Jews will vary law the least, only changing law within specific guidelines established by Rabbis of previous generations. The Conservative and Reform branches of Judaism are more open to adapting Jewish law as they see necessary (Tabory, 1991). Following this discussion of Judaism, the next section focused on marriage.

Marriage

According to Jewish law, a marriage is defined as a relationship between only two people. Marriage between two people brings together their particular values and beliefs into a single partnership (Kaslow & Robinson, 1996). While each person will have many values and beliefs, some of lesser importance and some of greater importance, those that heavily influence a person and take a central role in the person's choices, practices, and lifestyle will be the most important to be aware of when looking to understand the complexity of a couple's relationship. Most of the studies on religion and marriage have focused on the Christian faith and relatively little data has been gathered about marriage among Jews (Goodman, 2004).

Specifically, within Orthodox Judaism, marriage is defined as a relationship between a man and a woman (Schnall, 2006). On the other hand, the Conservative and Reform branches of Judaism will recognize same sex couples as being married in a religious context (Schnoor, 2006). The implications for whether there is a recognized marriage include whether a religious divorce is required if the couple decides to end the marriage and how to adjust the marriage ceremony that has specific roles for the man and woman (Schnoor, 2006).

Having defined marriage, it is worth understanding the interplay of religion and marriage. There are a number of statistics that indicate the importance of religion within a couple's relationship. Within couples in the United States, at least one member of 95 percent of married couples report a religious affiliation (Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney et al., 1999). According to Christiano (2000), while there is a tendency to overly report religious involvement, the high numbers reported in the statistics still speak to the perceived importance of religion within a marriage. The following section looked at the relationship of religion and marriage.

Distal Approaches to Studying Religion and Marriage

Many variables have been studied looking at the link between different aspects of marriage and religion. Those couples that report some allegiance to a religious affiliation are less likely to have a history of divorce than those without a reported religious affiliation (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2008). When one looks not only at the presence of religious affiliation, but also at the degree of religious affiliation one finds that a greater degree of religious participation, as indicated by frequency of religious center attendance, is positively correlated with a lower divorce rate (Breault & Kposowa, 1987; Call & Heaton, 1997). Other researchers have examined whether there is a lower divorce rate for couples that share their faith as compared to couples where each partner has a different faith or only one partner has a faith. In fact, in couples where the partners have the same faith the divorce rate is lower (Lehrer & Chadwick, 1993). Another idea proposed is that if the religion of partners within a marriage is one that

strongly discourages divorce, there will be a lower divorce rate. While a number of studies have looked at these variables, the data remains mixed (Chan & Heaton, 1999).

Research has looked at not only whether religiosity has impacted the rate of couples staying married, but also the relative happiness or satisfaction of these unions. Marital satisfaction is found to be significantly higher where there is a greater degree of religiousness (Schumm, Bollman, & Jurich, 1982). According to Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, and Swank (2008), the degree of personal religiousness and its positive correlation with marital satisfaction is even stronger for church members than for non-church members.

The level of perceived marital commitment is another variable studies have examined in its connection to the level of religiosity. Assessing commitment has been based on direct questioning and reporting by participants. While this type of data is largely subjective and it is therefore difficult to draw strong conclusions, overall, greater degrees of reported religiousness are connected to greater feeling of marital commitment (Larson & Goltz, 1989; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2008). Similarly, Wineberg (1994) found that couples where the partners shared the same faith at the start of their marriage were twice as likely to reconcile after a separation than couples that did not share a religion at the time of the wedding. Interestingly, where one partner converted to the religion of the other partner before the wedding, the likelihood of reconciliation increased four times. It is important to keep in mind that this study only looks at reconciliation, but not the maintenance of the marriage.

It is useful to think about some of the reasons why a greater degree of religiosity seems to positively correlate with a lower divorce rate and greater commitment. One idea considered in the literature is that religious couples are more likely to tolerate a greater degree of conflict and therefore stay married (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2008). Brody et al. (1994) found that increased self-reported religiosity was connected to a better quality of observed communication in African American couples.

Domestic violence is one particular area where religiosity does not appear to clearly improve the marriage relationship. Many of the studies conducted in this area looked at members of a particular faith and their degree of religiousness within their faith. Brinkerhoff et al. (1992) found that greater levels of religiosity do not lead to increased domestic violence in men from conservative Protestant churches. Similar studies done in Quaker households (Brutz & Ingoldsby, 1984) and Mormon households (Rollins & Oheneba-Sakyi, 1990) did not find greater rates of domestic violence when compared to the averages for the rest of the population. However, Ellison et al. (1999) reported an interesting finding where a lack of shared level of religious commitment or belief is linked to greater domestic violence. They found that where men were significantly more conservative in their religious views than their wives, they were 2.5 times more likely to have incidents of domestic violence than those couples who had similar levels of religious outlook.

Marriage has been looked at from a number of different viewpoints in how it has been impacted by religious factors. There have been positive correlations between religiosity and marital satisfaction, marital duration, commitment, and fidelity (Bahr &

Chadwick, 1985; Thomas & Cornwall, 1990). Others have found a correlation with marital stability (Call & Heaton, 1997). More recently, studies have attempted to look at not only correlation, but the nature and direction of the influence of factors. Some have found that, in fact, marital satisfaction preceded increased religious involvement (Booth, Johnson, & Branaman, 1995). A number of other studies indicate that similarity in religious belief is often an important part of long term marital relationships (Robinson, 1994; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996).

Proximal Approaches to Studying Religion and Marriage

More recently, researchers have begun looking at some of the harder to define and measure aspects of religiosity and their relationship to marriage. Mahoney et al. (1999) have looked at, what they call, the “sanctification of marriage.” They define sanctification as “a psychological process through which aspects of life are perceived by people as having spiritual character and significance” (Mahoney et al. 2003, p. 221).

They list two indices as ways of measuring the sanctification of marriage. The first includes how a couple may view their marriage as having sacred qualities. This is most clearly seen in how couples may use terms usually ascribed to religious description such as “holy,” “blessed,” “religious,” “spiritual,” or “heavenly.” More frequent use of such terms may suggest an increased degree of sanctification within the marriage as perceived by the partners. The second index in the study is how the persons within a marriage may view their marriage itself as an expression of Godliness within the world. The couple may see their marriage as being a result of their belief in God or their religion. It also affects how the couple views the particular circumstances of their marriage as being

influenced by God directly. God is looked at as a partner within the marriage influencing the other two members.

Mahoney and colleagues (1999) labeled another proximal construct as “joint religious activities,” referring to how often couples engage in religious activities together. It is a behavioral construct that looks to garner a sense of the depth of a couple’s shared religious and spiritual practices. These practices include such things as a couple praying together, speaking about living according to the will of God, the role of God in the marriage, and other personal spiritual issues. These would be the less formal aspects of this construct, but it would also include more formal aspects such as attending religious functions, religious education classes, performing religious or spiritual rituals, and celebrating religious holidays.

Religious Participation and Marriage

Larson and Goltz (1989) found that a higher commitment to marriage is correlated with an increased level of religious participation. This likely means that while religious participation is affected by many factors particular to the individual, it is also linked to a couple's relationship. Likewise, religious participation may very well positively affect a couple’s feelings of religious commitment.

In a similar vein, religious participation is also correlated with an increased marital and family satisfaction. Similarly, Bahr and Chadwick (1985) reviewed the literature on the impact that religious affiliation and religious activity have on marriage and found that there is a positive effect. It is important to note that affiliation without activity (e.g., stated religious affiliation without participation in religious activities) loses

much of the positive effect on marriage (Curtis & Ellison, 2002). It is specifically when the affiliation leads to shared religious participation that it creates an impact on the marital relationship.

Religion, Sexuality, and Marriage

While some have stated that “our societal views about sexuality continue to be dominated by the religious view that sexual desires are to be restrained and sexual pleasures to be avoided” (Davidson, Darling, and Norton, 1995), other research pointed to more modern societal views being less influenced by religion (McFarland, Uecker, & Regnerus, 2011).

Some have argued that strict religious upbringing is linked to sexual dysfunction (Carr, 2008; Masters & Johnson, 1970). Runkel (1998) is of the opinion that anxiety and guilt regarding sexuality and sex are a function of some religions and strict religious outlook. He argued that the background of religion creates an underlying feeling of anxiety around sexuality. This is a function of the strict rules around sex and sexuality found in many religions.

In one significant longitudinal study, a group of researchers from New Zealand followed 935 participants from the ages of 3 to 21. They looked at a number of factors including level of religiosity, persistence of religiosity, age of onset for sexual activity, type of sexual activity, and levels of sexual abstinence. One significant finding from this study is that those more religiously involved throughout the length of the study were at least four times more likely to be sexually abstinent than those with a low level of religious involvement (Paul, Fitzjohn, Eberhart-Philips, Herbison, & Dickson, 2000).

While such areas of research are telling, others have suggested that the results should not be overstated because they look at religiosity in a more easily quantifiable way, including categories such as church attendance or level of involvement in religious activities.

However, it may make more sense to look at specific beliefs surrounding the interplay of one's religious values or beliefs with one's beliefs about sexual activity within the confines of the beliefs of one's religious doctrine (Murray-Swank, Pargament, & Mahoney, 2002).

In some contexts, religion or spirituality can increase one's experience of sexuality. Murray-Swank, Pargament, and Mahoney (2002) made the point that the relationship between sexuality and spiritual or religious background has shifted in recent decades. While traditionally, religion has been seen as a force to restrict one's sexuality, for example, limiting premarital sex or homosexuality, more recent research has emphasized some of the ways in which religion has augmented the interplay between one's religious life and one's sexuality (Verhey, 1995). Some research has applied the theory of religious sanctification to one's sexual activity in a premarital relationship, allowing some to view premarital sexuality as something religiously positive (Murray-Swank Pargament & Mahoney, 2002). Likewise, Nelson (1987) spoke of the goal to "reunite sexuality with the experience of the sacred." In other religions as well, these same sentiments exist. Hinduism and Buddhism speak of the sexual union of man and woman as a way to capitalize on sexual excitement as a source of spiritual expression or energy (Puttick, 1997).

A sacred text, *Shir HaShirim*, also known as Song of Songs, centers around the spiritual relationship between God and His people. It is interesting to note, that this relationship is described as a parallel to the relationship between a man and woman (Murray-Swank, Pargament, & Mahoney 2002). This leads one to understand that the loving relationship between man and woman, including sexual interaction, is very much meant to be a holy and spiritual thing. As Murray-Swank, Pargament, and Mahoney (2002) note, "by comparing the sexual relationship of bride and bridegroom to the relationship between the holy covenant or the Lord and His chosen people, sexual intercourse becomes a sacred covenant within Judeo-Christian traditions" (p. 7), making it clear that this idea extends beyond only the bride and bridegroom to the continued marriage of man and woman.

Marital Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

While different religions certainly define and construct marriage in distinct ways, different ethnicities as well have their own constructs of what marriage might look like. For example, in Chinese society, Ting (2014) made the point that one's role within a marriage is primary rather than the feeling between the couple. This being the case, it is the purpose of the marriage to propagate and fulfill family expectations, providing for the family and producing male heirs. Marital satisfaction was less a construct of each partner's feelings towards the other and more about how well these expectations were satisfied (Wang, 1994). Even within the confines of one religion or ethnicity, marriage and marital satisfaction is likely to look very different in different time periods (Lucas et al., 2008).

Even decades ago, in Western society, marriage and marital satisfaction was less about intimacy and more to do with compatibility and shared goals (Goode, 1963).

Research in this area has largely defined three types of marriages. The first, institutionalized marriage, highlights the well defined role each partner plays. When each partner fulfills these obligations, the family functions well and is seen as a success within the larger society. Emotionally, the feelings between the partners are deemphasized.

Thus, marital satisfaction within this marriage has less to do with attachment or one's feelings of love, and more to do with the larger success of the family unit (Amato, 2009).

Wilcox & Nock (2006) contrasted this with the second type of marriage, companionate marriage, where the emphasis is on friendship, respect, and the feeling of love that is expected to grow as the relationship develops. As Cherlin (2004) noted, in the beginning of the 1960s the third type of marriage, "individualized marriage", began to emerge as an alternative to the more institutionalized definition of marriage. An individualized marriage, while similar to a companionate marriage, focuses the attention on the satisfaction of the individual rather than the couple as a whole (Ting, 2014). Another significant difference between individualized and companionate marriage is in terms of commitment. In a companionate marriage, the commitment is meant to be long-term, the foundation for this being shared feelings and closeness. In contrast, in an individualized marriage, the commitment at the outset is not necessarily meant to be long-term, but rather only so long as it fulfills each partner's needs. These needs vary depending on what the individual defines as needs within the relationship (Laur & Yudanis, 2011).

While these types of marriages may be more common as a general societal movement in the West, each type of marriage still exists. Therefore, to properly look at marital satisfaction, one must first define the general purpose or category of marriage.

What this points to is the idea that commitment to an institutionalized marriage over companionate or individualized marriage makes it easier to achieve marital satisfaction.

Ting (2014) noted that “as role expectations in an institutional marriage are unambiguous and marital behavior is sanctioned by strong social norms and customs, it is easier for couples to reach a mutual understanding, achieve common goals, and in turn help maintain a stable, satisfied relationship” (p. 119).

While there is ample empirical evidence that marital satisfaction has declined in the last several decades (Rogers & Amato, 1997; 2000; and Beck & Beck, 1995), others have found evidence that there are specific areas within a marriage where satisfaction has improved. Marital quality is a complex issue, making it difficult to give a blanket judgment of “satisfied” or “unsatisfied.” Corra et al. (2009) has found that when measuring the improvement of marital experiences, there is an increasing trend of such experiences specifically for Black women. Amato et al. (2003) brought the example of women’s employment in the workforce, that on the one hand, may lower the quality of the marriage because of a woman’s focus on employment, but at the same time, this woman brings additional resources which will relieve financial stresses. As a result of similar findings, Amato et al. (2003) found improved quality in marital relationships as perceived by both partners.

On the other hand, looking at marital dissatisfaction, there is research pointing to a number of factors that contribute. Dew and Wilcox (2011) made the point that changes in feelings of unfairness are more likely to contribute to marital dissatisfaction than actual changes in behaviors or roles within the family. Studies have looked at actual changes in roles through different transitions such as having a child or a change in occupation for one partner within the marriage and found that this actual change of role had less to do with overall satisfaction. The significant factor contributing to dissatisfaction was perceived inequality or unfairness of roles (Wilcox & Nock, 2006).

Likewise, many studies have found that a common time for marital dissatisfaction to become more prevalent is during the transition to parenthood (Shapiro, Gottman, & Carrere, 2000). Interestingly, other research has shown that wives who look at marriage primarily as a romantic relationship are more likely to feel dissatisfaction after becoming a parent than those who view having and raising children as one of the primary purposes of marriage (Belsky & Rovine, 1990).

Summary

This research endeavored to look at how members of the Orthodox Jewish tradition experience religion and spirituality in the context of marriage, as well as how they experience marriage in the context of religion and spirituality. This first chapter sought to gather past research from a myriad of different perspectives that pertain to specific pieces of this research question. After gathering these pieces together, much thought has been produced by other investigators in regards to spirituality, religion,

marriage, and Orthodox Jews, but none has been found to combine these areas together, to explore how these pieces may interact.

The formation of cultural or ethnic identity in general and Jewish identity in particular was explored. Phinney (1990; 1992) has contributed significantly to this area, providing specific guidelines for identifying a cultural identity. More specifically, the identification and formation of Jewish identity has been examined including the work of Himmelfarb (1980) who delineated seven dimensions particular to Jewish identification including ritual behavior, formal organizational participation, informal social ties with other Jews, attitude towards Israel, doctrinal belief, intellectual dimensions, and a form of giving charity. These seven dimensions represent a good starting point to help Jews define their Jewish identity, with some relating more to one category and others to another dimension. Schnoor (2005) found that the term “Jewish” refers to a particular culture or ethnicity and also refers to a religion. From another point of view, Sinclair and Milner (2005) discovered that not only is Jewish identity connected to religious belief, but also to attachment and involvement within the Jewish community. The varying opinions on the definition of a Jew offered by the subcategories within Judaism were explored.

Spirituality, being an elusive, hard to define concept, was looked at in light of past researchers who have sought to put words to the term. A number of definitions were gathered including Magill and McGreal (1988) who spoke of spirituality as encompassing everything that is involved in one's journey toward union with the divine and Witmer (1989) who said that it is a belief in a force or thing greater than oneself. A

detailed portrait of spirituality was painted in the study of Ingersoll (1994) whose research led him to define spirituality with seven dimensions, namely, meaning, conception of divinity, relationship, mystery, experience, play, and integration. Each of these dimensions was examined in greater detail. One conclusion drawn is that while it does help to gather definitions of spirituality, it is also important to be open to and recognize that spirituality is often a very personal, idiosyncratic experience, not to be limited by others' prior experiences.

As with spirituality, religion was explored in this review of literature to put words to the formation and expression of religion from various cultural perspectives. A number of definitions have been developed by previous research including Marty and Appleby (1991) who classified religion as being part of a person's identity that consist of specific rituals, customs, beliefs, ceremonies, and symbols unique to that religion, and Helminiak (2001), who called religion a set of doctrines, ethical codes, practices, rituals, texts, and traditions. Others connected it more to one's frequency of prayer (Francis, 1992; Lowenthal et al., 2003) or to it being a communal based activity (Sarason, 1993). Again, in looking at religion amongst Orthodox Jews, the focus allowed for a unique definition of religion while being informed by past thought.

Marriage and the role of spirituality or religion within marriage was the final major component explored in this review. Both presence of religion and degree of affiliation contribute to perceived satisfaction of marriage (Breault & Kposowa, 1987; Larson & Goltz, 1989; Call & Heaton, 1997; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2008). Almost all of the research found focuses on the interaction of religion and

marriage within the Christian faith, leaving room to explore similarities and differences when changing the religion variable. In fact, this may change the variable of marriage as well because the definition of marriage is partly determined by one's cultural or religious perspective. Sexuality as part of the marriage relationship from a religious perspective has shifted over past decades, with more recent research focusing on ways religion has augmented the interplay between one's religious life and one's sexuality (Verhey, 1995)

Other studies have focused on one of the questions brought up in this research: Is the interaction between religion and marriage bidirectional? Does religion not only affect marriage but can marriage also affect religion? In fact, often, marital satisfaction preceded increased religious involvement (Booth, Johnson, & Branaman, 1995) and that shared religious belief is an important component of a long term committed relationship (Robinson, 1994; Kaslow & Robinson, 1996). Others have looked in greater depth at religion and marriage through more proximal approaches. Some of the significant contributions were given by Mahoney et al. (1999; 2003) by introducing the concepts of "sanctification of marriage" as well as "joint religious activities."

As different cultures and religions define the role of marriage in different ways, this exploration has gathered thought on the changing perspective of the marriage construct. Past research has largely identified three types of marriage. The institutional marriage highlights the well defined role each partner plays (Goode, 1963) and in this case marital satisfaction has less to do with attachment or one's feeling of love, and more to do with the larger success of the family unit (Amato, 2009). In a companionate marriage the feeling between partners is a primary focus, with these feelings meant to

grow and develop over time (Wilcox & Nock, 2006). While similar to a companionate marriage in its focus on the feelings of the partners, the individualized marriage differs in the manner of commitment towards the union. In an individualized marriage the commitment at the outset is not necessarily meant to be long-term, but rather only so long as it is fulfilling each partner's needs (Laur & Yudanis, 2011).

The research in many of these specific constructs has been substantial. However, the constructs are all complex and continue to change over time, as people change. As such, a phenomenological approach towards generating thought and understanding of how spirituality and religiosity interact with marriage in an Orthodox Jewish population was likely to yield fruitful and novel thought. This was of interest to this researcher due to his identification with and proximity to this population. In addition, the lack of research in this area may spur productive thought for others to use as a starting point for research in other specific populations.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The approach of this study was informed by and built upon work and knowledge covered in the literature review. Jewish identity in general, as well as the more specific identity found within each of the branches of Judaism has been explored. Religiosity has been defined in a broad sense as it pertains to many religions and then more narrowly characterized for Orthodox Judaism. Likewise, research pertaining to spirituality both in regards to the general population as well as specifically for Orthodox Judaism has been explored. Marriage, being the third major component of this study, was explored by offering different theoretical perspectives on marriage, including both distal and proximal measures. Lastly, the previous chapter gathered thought on marriage in Orthodox Judaism. The primary question asked by this research was: How do spirituality and religiosity experienced by Orthodox Jewish couples interact with their marriage relationships? This chapter detailed the method utilized by this study.

In the following pages, the choice of a phenomenological qualitative research design was explained and the underlying research questions were presented. The method of sampling was identified along with the theory guiding its choice. Also included were the choice of participants, and a description of the researcher. There was a discussion of the confidentiality and safety of the data gathered as well as the methodology used to analyze the data. Finally, the credibility of this research, as well as the transferability of this research to other populations and areas of study was explored.

Research Design

In consideration of the research question asked, a qualitative method of inquiry was chosen. According to Creswell (2007) qualitative research starts by looking at the experience without adding any layers of theory or meaning from the outside, only later adding levels of interpretation. Within the qualitative method of research a phenomenological mode of inquiry was assessed as the most suitable to access the data most relevant to this topic. Phenomenology was born from a method of philosophy founded by Edmund Husserl, centered around the idea that investigation of anything in our human experience should begin with looking at the human experience itself (Ashworth, 2008). Qualitative research focuses on the experiences of participants and the interpretations those individuals lend to their experiences. This is particularly so in the case of phenomenological research (Merriam, 2002).

This type of research looks to further an understanding of the meaning found within our everyday experiences. The directive behind this style of research is to look for the meaning and description from the point of view of those being researched or studied, prior to any interpretation or meaning being applied to that experience (Creswell, 2012).

One of the goals in approaching this research was to come at it from an unbiased point of view, allowing the data to emerge on its own without trying to fit the data into a previously developed theory (van Manen, 1990). Another way of saying this is to learn of people's experiences through their own words or actions, letting these guide one's understanding of the area being researched (Creswell, 2012). While it is true that every individual truly has a unique frame of reference for any experience, including the one

gathering this research, these interviews seeks to gather common experiences from the participants (Giorgi, 1989).

One distinguishing aspect of phenomenological research is its allowance and encouragement of the relationship and involvement between the researcher and participant (Giorgi, 1989). The individual's experience, the researcher's interpretation, and the developing relationship between researcher and participant are all valid sources of meaningful data (Groenewald, 2004). Rather than being something tolerated, the shared experiences of the researcher and participant are another rich source of bountiful data. This blurring of the phenomenon being studied with the researcher conducting the investigation allows intentional experience of the researcher with the phenomenon. This then leads to a deeper understanding and interpretation of the phenomena and data than if the researcher attempted to remain separate or aloof (Giorgi, 2008).

While the researcher gathered the participants' experiences, his own experiences, and interpretations of the participants' experiences, the participants' interpretation or meaning of the experiences were given primary importance (Moustakas, 1994). This highlights the challenge of finding meaning in the researcher's role but at the same time bracketing that role to give primary importance to the participants' voices.

Moustakas (1994) spoke of getting at the essence of an experience by coming at it from as many points of view as possible. Only after gathering these points of view together, can one begin to sense this core understanding or meaning to be found within these experiences. The meaning that individuals attach to their experiences "are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than

narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell, 2013). These lived experiences are best gathered by focusing on a small number of subjects for an extensive engagement to develop “patterns and relationships of meaning” (Moustakas, 1994).

While there are a number of ways to approach phenomenological inquiry, it being a fluid process focused on getting to the essence of experience (Moustakas, 1994), the method chosen for this exploration focused on individual interviews around experiences.

This researcher attempted to answer the question how Orthodox Jewish individuals experience religion and spirituality within the context of marriage.

Acknowledging it likely that participants would have unique experiences, as well as thoughts on those experiences, worthy of contributing to a lack of prior research into this area, interviews of individuals were conducted to gather a rich source of data. Therefore, this study fits well with the goals and processes of phenomenological research. A qualitative phenomenological research design was chosen to advance understanding of the question: How do Orthodox Jews experience spirituality and religiosity in the context of the marriage relationship, and in turn, how does marriage affect that spirituality and religiosity?

Research Questions

This study explored how spirituality and religiosity are experienced by Orthodox Jewish couples within their marriage relationships. More specifically, how are Orthodox Jewish couples (where spirituality and religiosity is usually a central part of one’s lifestyle) impacted by spirituality and religiosity in their most intimate relationship, marriage. There were two questions considered in light of the study:

1. How do the constructs of religiosity and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism affect the marriage relationship?
2. How does the construct of the marriage relationship affect the religiosity and spirituality of Orthodox Jews?

Sampling

This being a phenomenological qualitative study, purposive sampling was used to gather participants whose experiences would speak most to the underlying research. The goal of this type of sampling was to find excellent examples of the phenomena being studied without the examples being so unique that they do not apply to others (Patton, 1990). This process was most appropriate as the goal of this research was not to make generalizations, rather to gather experiences of individuals (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Given (2008) delineated, among others, both criterion sampling and theory-guided sampling as more specific methods of purposive sampling. Criterion sampling involves searching for participants who meet certain criteria being studied. Theory-guided sampling typically looks for individuals who are likely to exemplify the theoretical constructs being studied (Given, 2008). A third type of sampling this study may be said to have employed is typical case sampling. When the individuals utilized in a research project do not stand out from more specific examples of the population being studied, they represent the “typical” population member and represent a better potential sample participant.

In regards to the size of the sample, it is best to start at the end, by thinking about the goal of the research. The goal of this research was to gather experiences of

individuals, looking for common themes across this data that will then answer the research question. The concept of “saturation” is important to keep in mind when selecting a sample size, as once this is reached one has achieved the goal set forth in the beginning of the inquiry. Saturation, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), is achieved when further data no longer provides new themes or ideas to the previously gathered data. According to McCracken (1988), to achieve saturation an appropriate sample size is a range of six to eight participants. By having the sample size stay in this range, the researcher was able to gather information rich data sets and focus on in-depth interviews of the participants. The rich descriptions gathered allowed for meaningful themes to emerge lending understanding to the phenomena in question.

Participants

Participants included individuals from the Orthodox Jewish community of Cleveland and its surrounding suburbs. The reason for this choice of population is because current research on this topic is lacking, in particular for the Orthodox branch within Judaism and this community represents a major pocket of Orthodox Jews. The population included male and female participants.

The following criteria were met for participants in this study:

1. The participant considered herself/himself a member of Orthodox Judaism.
2. The participant could be previously married or currently married.

3. The participant was willing to participate in one or two digitally recorded audio interviews, likely to last at least one to one-and-a-half hours.
4. The participant was at least 18 years of age.

Description of the Researcher

Whereas quantitative research actively looks to remove, as much as can be, the researcher from influencing the process of gathering data, qualitative research turns this idea around, recognizing that the involvement of the researcher in the process of gathering data is meaningful as well (Creswell, 2007). The researcher, throughout the process, was actively involved in the experience of this research. Beginning with choosing the area to research, choosing the methodology, the participants, gathering data, and then allowing thought to emerge from that data, the researcher was an active participant in the process of reaching the essence of the phenomena (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This being the case, it is relevant to share details about this researcher. This person is a Professional Clinical Counselor in Ohio, currently enrolled as a doctoral candidate in a counselor education and supervision doctoral program. The researcher works in a school based setting counseling children, adolescents, and the families of students in matters pertaining to mental health. Additionally, the researcher works in private practice seeing clients for individual therapy. This researcher grew up in the Cleveland Orthodox Jewish community, having attended Jewish day school and synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath and Holidays. This involvement in the Jewish community led to interest in further understanding how areas studied by others is similar

and different in reference to the Orthodox Jewish community. The areas of religion and spirituality have played significant roles in this researcher's life, informing his major life decisions, including marriage. Prior to and, in part, while working toward his Masters degree in Community Counseling, this researcher was ordained as a Rabbi in the Orthodox Jewish tradition. Being married, the researcher has his own perspective on the role of marriage, marriage satisfaction, and the way religiosity and spirituality impacts the marriage relationship. While the researcher did his best to allow the participants' experiences to emerge on their own, it would be remiss to not acknowledge that there exists significant experience of these constructs on the part of the researcher.

Also necessary at this point, is to mention this researcher's biases. Having been raised in the Orthodox Jewish tradition, he believes the Orthodox branch of Judaism to be the most authentic form of Judaism. The concept of adapting religion to the changing nature of society is limited to changes made within preset rules of Jewish law.

Additionally, marriage is a holy union that has multiple aspects. One purpose is the relationship of the couple and their love for one another is important and necessary. This researcher believes that both religion and spirituality are unique aspects of Judaism. To perform ritual without having the feeling or intent behind it is an empty process. Likewise, feeling close to God in one's heart without performing the rituals or keeping the laws is missing the point. These biases will likely inform this researcher's interpretation of the results of this study.

Giorgi and Giorgi (2008) spoke of the idea of bracketing to allow a researcher to approach scientific qualitative inquiry. This process is one that must take place at the

start as well as throughout the investigation. The beginning of this process according to Husserl is to become aware of one's own biases and meanings surrounding an experience (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). The goal of bracketing is not to remove the biases or assumptions, or to pretend they do not exist. Rather, the goal is to acknowledge them and maintain an awareness that they are there in the back of one's mind. This allows one to constantly stay in a state of questioning one's own motives or influence when gathering data from others' experiences. While the ideal is for the researcher to, as closely as possible, gather and share the essence experience of the participants, it is also paramount that the researcher be honest and open about how the participants' descriptions and narratives are impacted by the researcher's perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Procedure

Individuals were asked to participate via e-mail solicitation and advertisements on a local Jewish website. The criteria mentioned above were clearly mentioned in the solicitation as well as participation at any point being voluntary. This method of solicitation was used because it reached a large number of potential participants quickly. It was made clear that a participant may choose to not continue the interview or research process at any time, without the need to provide a reason.

When a response was received from the solicitation indicating interest, the researcher followed up with a brief phone interview. Basic contact information was collected and each potential participant was given a few of the basic questions the interviewer would likely use, which would cover the general research topic. As mentioned above, this was done to help screen participants to make sure they would be

appropriate for this research, able to share rich descriptions of the phenomena under investigation. The participants had a chance to ask questions and time to consider before deciding whether or not they wanted to participate.

During this phone call the researcher asked potential participants to consider from their own point of view their current emotional stability and stability of their marriage relationships before deciding to participate. It was explained that emotions or feelings often surface during this process and if there is known significant distress in life, on a personal level, or in regards to their marriage relationships, participants may become uncomfortable or experience distress. Pointing this out during the phone call allowed the potential participants to self-screen and consider that they may not be comfortable with this process. This gave them room to say they do not wish to participate.

If the participant confirmed that the research did not represent a personal belief system conflict and reported no significant stresses outside of normal daily living, then a time was set to conduct a full interview. However, if the subject reported significant distress or belief conflict and therefore did not seem suitable for the above reasons, then the person was asked to not participate, explaining that there is a strong likelihood of increasing distress of the participant if we were to explore in great detail. While this may be a worthwhile and even helpful process, it is best done in a therapeutic context.

Appropriate referrals were given. A replacement participant was solicited and subject to the same pre-interview process.

Assuming the potential participant felt that this research was personally relevant and wished to continue, an appointment was set to conduct an interview. A copy of an

informed consent was sent to the participant to read over before the interview. This consent was signed, returned, and kept in a secure location. Detailed information about contacting the researcher with questions regarding the informed consent or any matter pertaining to the interview process was provided.

Additionally, during this initial phone call, the potential participant's contact information was gathered. This included a telephone number as well as an email address. This information was put into an excel file that was then password protected and only kept on a computer with a password protected login. Assuming the participant wished to continue and the researcher found the candidate suitable to this point, a one-page summary of the focus of this study was sent via email. Also included were a number of the open ended questions to be used during the interview. The reason a summary was sent was to encourage the participant to begin thinking about the topic. The research questions probed deep areas that required a lot of introspection and self awareness on the part of the participant. As such, it was helpful to start the "conversation" prior to the actual interview. At the same time, the summary was kept intentionally brief, without sharing too much about the background of the study, so as not to unduly influence the participant's ideas or responses regarding this topic. In phenomenological qualitative research, it is most important that the data is based primarily on the untainted experiences of the participants (Merriam, 2009).

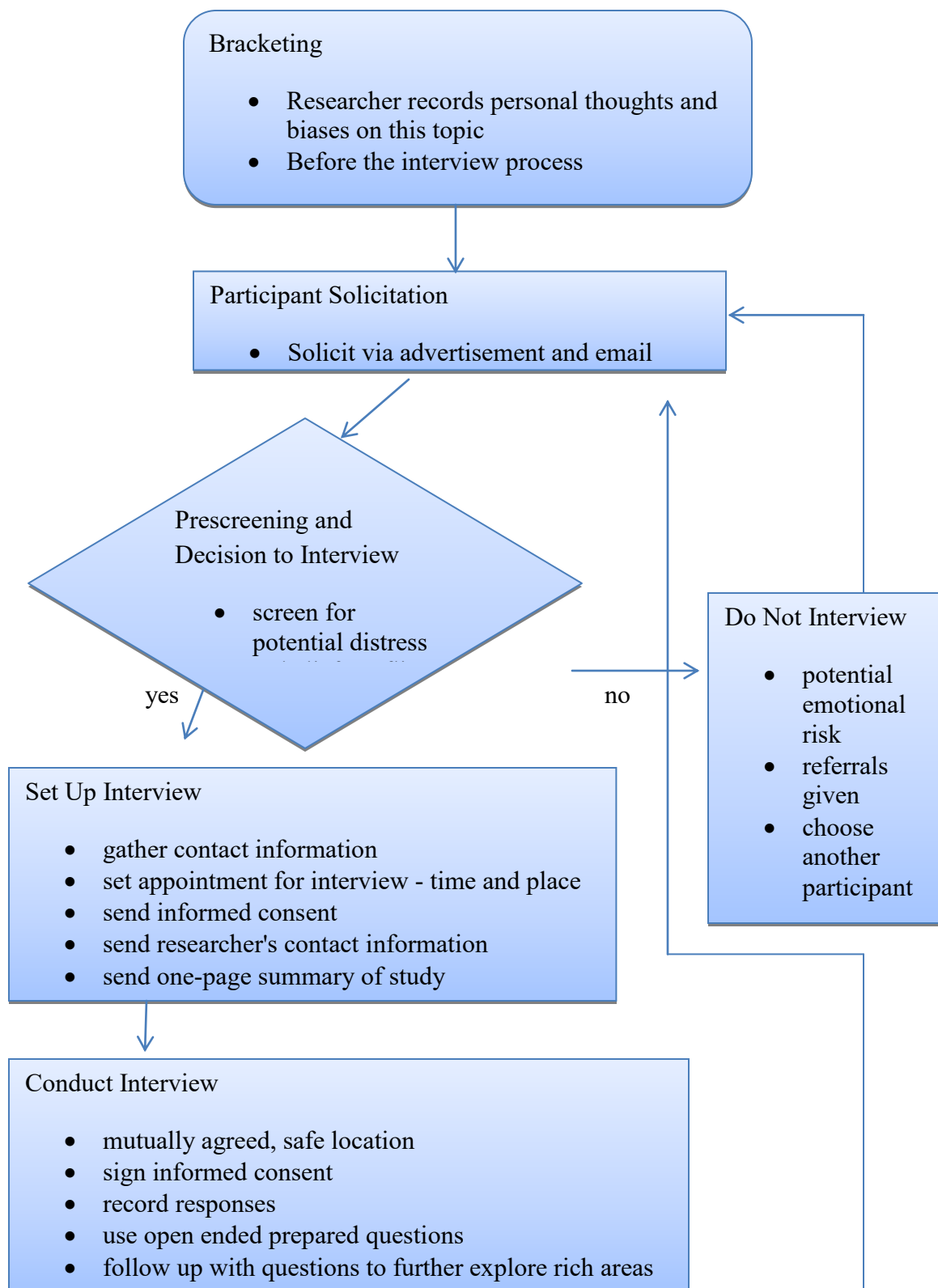
Each participant was met at a mutually agreed upon location. The criteria for the meeting spot was that it be a location quiet enough for the participant to think clearly and not be distracted, while still being a place where the participant would feel comfortable.

All locations chosen were public spaces such as a coffee shop or library. This ensured safety of both the participant and researcher, as well as comfort during the interview.

Before the interview, each person was given a brief overview of the topic to be discussed. An informed consent document was again presented if the participant did not bring the one previously provided. After it was read, the participant was asked if it was fully understood. An overview of the process was given, explaining that the interview would last as long as the participant wished, based on what was chosen to share. There was also the possibility of following up via telephone or e-mail if further clarification was needed after the researcher reflected on the responses. The participant was given a chance to ask questions to clarify anything. This interviewer had an outline of the general areas to cover. At this point, the digital audio recorder was turned on to begin the interview.

So as not to leave the participant feeling vulnerable or in need of care after exposing potentially sensitive areas, following each interview, referrals for appropriate mental health resources were given to each participant. The consideration was that the subject of investigation had potential to prompt deep feelings surrounding some meaningful personal issues for the participants.

Study Flowchart



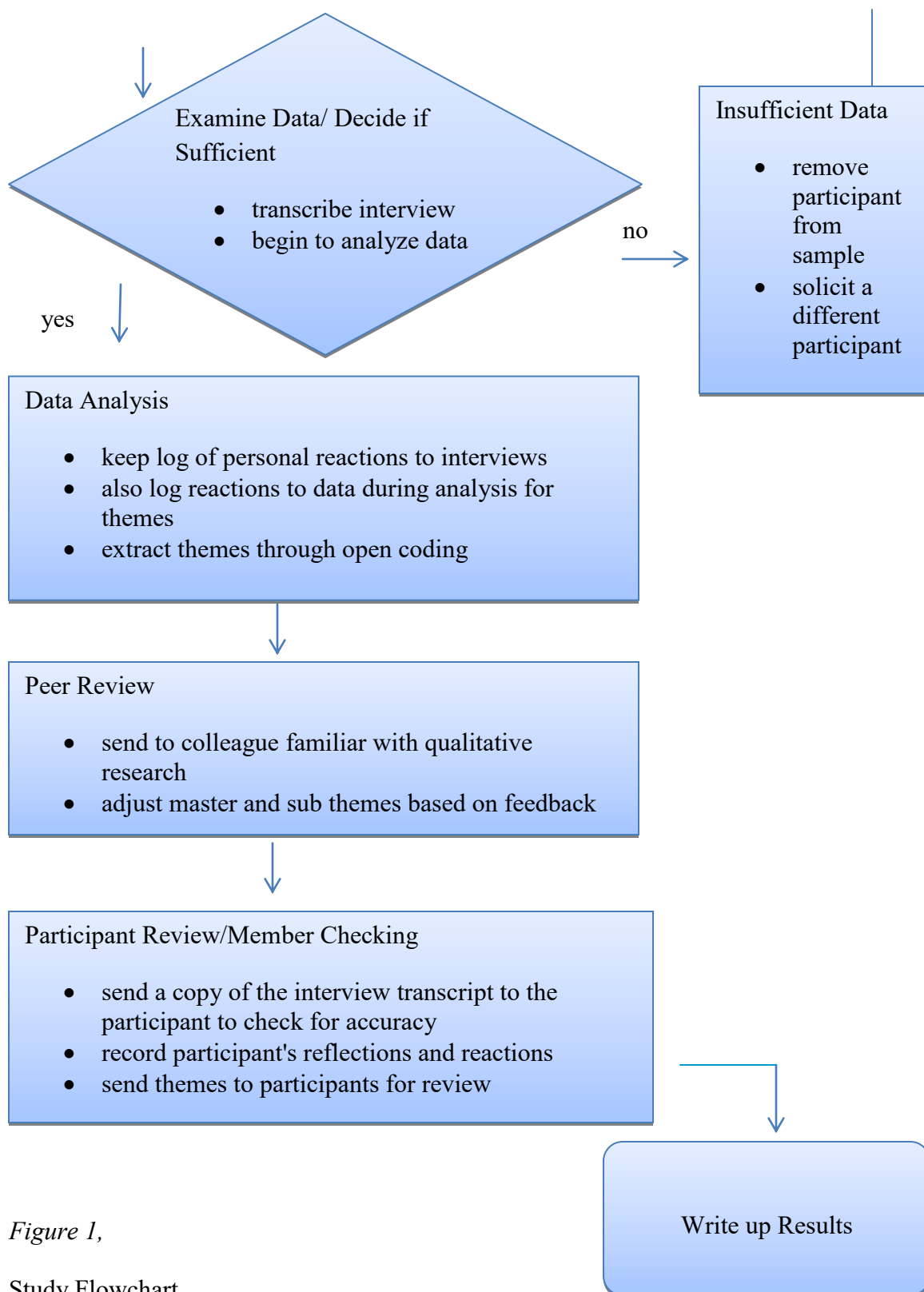


Figure 1,

Study Flowchart

Instrumentation

The method used to interview was that of responsive interviewing as presented by Rubin and Rubin (2005). One of the reasons this model was chosen is because the purpose of the study is to get at as much depth as possible through the interviews. Additionally, it allowed the interviews to be flexible. The initial and fundamental questions in the interview were formed ahead of time.

Each of the research questions, detailed above, had at least one general interview question to help the participant explore this topic. The questions were used to explore the experience of spirituality and religiosity within Orthodox Jewish couples. For example, one question used to explore spirituality was, “How would you define spirituality?” Follow-up questions were used to further elicit more detail and information. These questions were tailored to each participant based on how they answer the original question. This flexible style of mixing preformed questions with spontaneous questions is typical of responsive interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). If the subject provided a brief answer regarding spirituality, questions were used to ask for specific areas of spirituality for this person. For example, “How do you experience spirituality when involved in a religious practice?” The interviewer would sometimes reflect the participant's answers as well as prompt for further information with follow-up questions. These were used as a method to elicit more information in an area the participant had already brought up or to clarify something said previously. The focus was on specifically looking for the participant's interpretation of their own experience.

If a participant seemed hesitant or uncomfortable with a specific line of questioning, the researcher asked the participant if this area was uncomfortable to talk about. If the participant confirmed that this was in fact the case, and the subject matter was a major part of the interview, another participant was solicited by the above pre-interview process. The first participant was made aware that there was no need to continue with the interview and thanked for the time spent. However, if the participant was willing to share more or the sensitive area did not constitute a major part of the subject, the interview continued. While it is important to cover all of the topics mentioned previously, at the time, if the participant chose to delve deeper or share more about a specific topic, this was allowed, and in fact, encouraged, as this was likely to lead to richer data. If at any point in the interview the participant appeared particularly uncomfortable, the option was given to not continue.

There was the possible eventuality that a participant would appear to not understand the questions as they were asked, or did not have a significant amount to say about one or more of the topics. In this case, if the researcher was unable to elicit sufficient data for meaningful themes, the plan was for this participant to be removed from the sample and replaced by a new participant. The participant removed was told that the interview was sufficient and thanked.

In the weeks following each interview, the audio files were transcribed. This began the initial process of analyzing the data. At the same time, a copy of the transcript was sent to the participant to allow them to check for accuracy. Particular areas where

there seemed to be more room for exploration or clarification were highlighted and organized to formulate questions for a follow up via email or phone.

The researcher kept a log of his personal thoughts and reactions that occurred during the interview. This was done as soon as possible after the interview concluded, in order to accurately represent his personal experiences during the interview. Additionally, the researcher kept a log to record his thoughts and reactions that developed after thinking about the interviews over extended periods of time. The data was then later analyzed to allow new questions to emerge that were then used to formulate new inquiries and areas to explore.

Confidentiality and Safety of Data

The digital audio files were stored on a password protected computer inside of a locked room. The only person with access to this computer was the researcher. The names of the participants were not used from the start of the data analysis. Each participant was given a pseudonym that was used consistently throughout the analysis part of this inquiry. While some demographic information about each participant is shared in the results section, these details were approved by the participants and researcher together to allow the understanding of the individual to emerge without sacrificing their anonymity.

Data Analysis

The process of open coding was used to extract themes from the interviews (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The researcher created a hierarchy of master themes or headings and sub-headings. This process allowed the researcher to begin organizing the

data to extract meaning. This was a subjective process. Phrases or ideas that are similar are grouped together to look for shared or overlapping experience.

The data analysis is a crucial step because it takes the raw data from the participant interviews and translates it into meaningful phenomenological descriptions. It is these descriptions that allow themes and patterns to begin to emerge. This is the process that a researcher goes through to get at the essence of the phenomena being studied (van Manen, 1990).

Creswell (2012) recommends four general steps when conducting data analysis for qualitative data.

1. The researcher analyzes the data for statements that stand out as being particularly significant.
2. These statements are analyzed and assigned a possible theme. Then, these statements are then grouped under these themes. This process is also known as “open coding.”
3. The themes are grouped or connected with similar themes, beginning the process of forming a narrative. These themes allow for a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the area under investigation.
4. These themes are allowed to merge into a single narrative. The researcher uses a purposeful process of looking for areas to connect the themes. This culminates the active analysis with the result being a cohesive and meaningful understanding of the essence of the research.

This study's process of data analysis involved the above steps. After the interviews were completed, the researcher created a transcript for each of the interviews. Once these transcripts were created and verified for accuracy they were read over several times to allow themes to emerge from the data. The statements that appeared to be most important and hold significant meaning were highlighted or underlined. When a possible theme came to mind as the transcripts were being read it was written down. A long list of possible themes was created from this process. This began the process of open coding.

After having gone through the transcripts several times for the statements to be considered, these were grouped into the initial list of themes that might represent the data. Once these themes were created and the list drawn up, the researcher read them over a number of times to see whether the themes may be connected or related. A number of the themes were merged into slightly broader categories to create new themes. While the themes that emerged certainly did not represent all of the ideas that resulted from the data, they were some of the central concepts running through the interviews. Once the themes were chosen, with them in mind, the data was looked at once again to see how the themes apply to each particular participant.

Viewing the interviews with the themes in mind allowed the researcher to look for patterns where the data supported the theme as well as places it did not. This gave the opportunity to further refine and analyze the conclusions. As the process continued, the themes were clarified and changed to better represent the data.

After the themes were extracted they were sent to a colleague for peer review. This colleague was a researcher familiar with the process of qualitative research. After

the themes were verified via peer review, a copy of these themes was sent to the participants. Having gathered the data from the participants, the most appropriate people to do member checks are the participants themselves. These member checks involve asking the participants involved to verify that the data and conclusions being drawn from the data represent the intent of what was said. Therefore, a summary of the conclusions drawn from the themes that emerged from the previously mentioned process of data analysis was compiled and sent to each participant to elicit feedback. The participant was asked to verify that this was accurate and to suggest any areas that may require emendation. Again, as with the first interview, a log was kept to immediately record the researcher's reflections. This process of member checking informed the analysis and is presented as well in the results.

Personal Interest

The heuristic approach as presented by Moustakas (1990) best represents this researcher's general line of inquiry. The start of formulating the research questions asked in this study was born from a strong need to discover the nature of personal experiences within marriage connected to spirituality and religion. The topic was further narrowed to understanding the specific population that this researcher most strongly identified with, Orthodox Jewry. This researcher's own need to know, understand, and discover are what energized his inquiry.

As Moustakas (1990) points out a heuristic research question needs to have several features:

1. It seeks to reveal more fully the essence of meaning of a phenomenon of human experience.
2. It seeks to discover the qualitative aspects, rather than quantitative dimensions, of the phenomenon.
3. It engages one's total self and evokes a personal and passionate involvement and active participation in the process.
4. It does not seek to predict or to determine causal relationships.
5. It is illuminated through careful descriptions, illustrations, metaphors, poetry, dialogue, and other creative renderings rather than measurements, ratings or scores.

(Moustakas, 1990, pp. 41-42)

This research sought to address the above points, allowing the process of investigation to discover new ideas and concepts within the phenomenological world of religion, spirituality, and Orthodox Jewry.

Credibility and Trustworthiness of the Data

Both Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Creswell (2012) discuss the importance of credibility and trustworthiness in the research design. This researcher used a number of their methods to ensure credibility in this study.

Bracketing

To clarify researcher bias, prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher's thoughts were recorded and reflected upon. Within qualitative research design, this process is often called bracketing (Creswell, 2007). This allowed the researcher to be

aware of his own biases as well as look for ways that the data collection and analysis process may have influenced his own thinking. As mentioned before, while it is important to allow the phenomenological data to speak for itself, it is not expected that the researcher remain completely objective. Rather, the goal is for the researcher to be aware of how his own thoughts and interpretations are involved in the data collection and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reflective logs were also used immediately after the interviews, as well as in the months that followed as the analysis was done, to clarify the researcher's personal thoughts as they related to the emerging themes.

These logs were maintained and collected as part of an audit trail for this research. Any other notes taken about interviews or the process of data collection or analysis were also saved. These documents represent the audit trail to ensure trustworthiness and present an authentic view of the process detailed above.

Trustworthiness

To enhance trustworthiness, methods employed included triangulation. This involves the collection and use of multiple sources of data such as varied participants, methods, and theories to inform the creation and implementation of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). When these sources come to the same or a similar conclusion, the trustworthiness of the data is enhanced, it being more likely that the discovered results are more accurate. In the present study, the interview transcripts and the reflective journals of the researcher provided the majority of the data. While interviews from participants may be looked at as one source of data, it is worth noting that having

multiple participants increases trustworthiness as well (Creswell, 2007), similar to the concept of triangulation.

Peer Review and Member Checks

Peer review was also used to verify that the researcher was moving in the appropriate direction, as viewed by others. This is a crucial part of maintaining credibility and trustworthiness of the study as the bulk of the interpretation of themes rests on one person (Creswell, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The peer utilized was familiar with qualitative research. The reviewer was asked to be critical as this would provide the most assistance in verifying the credibility of the researcher's work. This gave opportunity for the researcher and the reviewer to discuss any potential weaknesses in the credibility of the themes, and for the researcher to hear reflections on his data from another point of view. As mentioned previously, member checking was used by sending a transcript to each participant after each interview as well as sending a summary of the results and the emergent themes, asking for reflections.

Transferability and Application to the Field of Counseling

While the goal of research in general is to find meaning that can lend understanding to the area of investigation (Creswell, 2013), the issue of what to do with that research thereafter is particularly challenging in a qualitative research design.

Merriam (2009) points out that transferability really applies to the idea of generalizability which is often not appropriate, based on the small population and goal of the research. That being said, as other researchers read the results of this investigation, they may begin to sense that some of the conclusions drawn here may apply to other

populations as well. When this is the case, the burden of generalizability of the results and verification that this is indeed appropriate, lies with the one attempting to transfer this research's results to another area of research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). While this investigator cannot state that the results of this research can be transferred to a population other than the one interviewed, he believes that there is room to explore the possibility that many of these themes will apply. This leaves space for future researchers to conduct their own investigations to verify if this is indeed the case.

Summary

The phenomenological method of inquiry was explored, as well as the justification for its use in the present research. The specific research questions were identified, namely:

1. How do the religiosity and spirituality of an individual's Orthodox Judaism affect the marriage relationship?
2. How does the marriage relationship affect the religiosity and spirituality of the individual's Orthodox Judaism?

Purposive sampling was used to gather participants and justification for its use was provided. To identify which participants to sample, criteria were outlined to give the greatest likelihood of gathering rich or "thick" descriptions. As the researcher played a significant role in the gathering and interpretation of the data, the researcher's background was provided to lend further understanding of how it may impact the study. Each step of the study from gathering, interviewing, and following up with participants was described in detail. The instruments used to gather data were provided as well.

Creswell's general steps of conducting qualitative data analysis were described. Finally, the researcher provided descriptions of the credibility of the research, the transferability of the findings, and trustworthiness of the study.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

This chapter will present the results of the interviews conducted as per the procedure detailed in the previous chapter. The method of inquiry utilized for this study was from the phenomenological perspective. More specifically, responsive interviewing as presented by Rubin and Rubin (2005) was the method used to elicit data from the participants via interviews. The reader will be introduced to the eight participants chosen for this study and brief demographic and personality details will be shared. Following this, the rationale for the development of the particular themes formulated from the data gleaned from the interviews will be presented. Each of the themes will be introduced along with sub-themes directly connected to the themes. Following each theme or sub-theme will be the detailed ideas and quotes from the participants allowing their words to speak directly to the theme being explored.

Briefly, the results gathered from the data analysis of the interviews revealed four major themes and two minor themes. The four themes looked at the interaction of two variables, Orthodox Judaism and marriage, and compared the interactions in a bidirectional manner. Further, each direction was looked at in two ways, how does each factor enhance the other and how does it detract from the other. As such, the major themes that emerged were as follows: (a) Orthodox Judaism enhances marriage, (b) marriage enhances Orthodox Judaism, (c) Orthodox Judaism detracts from marriage, and (d) marriage detracts from Orthodox Judaism. Each of the themes was detailed through particular sub-themes to support the major theme.

In addition there were two minor themes that arose from the study that were deemed worthy of noting. These two themes were: (a) the role of community in the Orthodox Jewish life of marriage partners, and (b) the differing roles and foci of partners in Orthodox Judaism. These themes emerged from enough of the interviews, speaking to their importance.

Participants

Table 1

Demographic Information

Name	Age	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Years Married
Chana	39	F	Caucasian	10
Rivka	41	F	Caucasian	16
Dinah	29	F	Caucasian	12
Leah	70	F	Caucasian	39
Levi	34	M	Caucasian	10
Ben	40	M	Caucasian	15
Naftali	74	M	Caucasian	35
Avi	40	M	Caucasian	12

Eight people participated in this study, four women and four men. As the area under investigation focused on Orthodox Jews, purposive sampling was used to gather the participants from the greater Cleveland Orthodox Jewish community. All of them identified as Caucasian and the range of years each was married varied from 10 to 39 years. The ages ranged from 29 years old to 74 years old, allowing the participants to provide a broad range of experiences from various stages of life. All of the participants had children, the numbers of children ranging from two to four. The criteria allowing the participants to be included in the study included identifying as an Orthodox Jew, being married presently or in the past, a willingness to participate in the study and have the conversation recorded in audio format, and be of at least 18 years of age. The following gives a brief overview of each participant, providing demographic information as well as details that speak to the personality of each person. This was done to enhance the presentation of each participant's thoughts throughout this section as their data support the themes being analyzed. For the purpose of anonymity of the participants pseudonyms have been used.

Chana

Chana is a 39 year old woman living in Cleveland, Ohio for the past eight years. Having grown up in a family that considered themselves Orthodox, her level of commitment towards Orthodox Judaism strengthened beyond what her parents brought into their home by the time she was in her early twenties. She began taking on different levels of practice starting in her late teens. Her path of religious growth has been fairly stable since being married to her husband. Today she is a Judaic studies teacher at an

Orthodox Jewish day school. She has been married to her husband for the past ten years and they have four children together. She was talkative, open about her experience, and it was important to her to be true to her own beliefs within the realm of Orthodox Judaism.

Rivka

Rivka, 41 years old, did not grow up in an Orthodox Jewish home. Her parents were what she called "Traditional," in that they would have Friday night dinners and get together for some of the Jewish Holidays, but they were not keeping Sabbath or Kosher with all its laws. Synagogue attendance was minimal, usually attending only during the High Holidays. Her boyfriend in college is the one who first introduced her to Orthodox Judaism and they began attending services weekly. After a couple of years of steady growth she committed to an Orthodox lifestyle and began married life together with her husband. She has been married for 16 years and has four children. While she appeared on the outside to fit in well in the Orthodox Jewish world, it was clear after speaking to her that she struggles with feeling this way internally. She seems to hold onto pieces of her past life, before she became Orthodox, because they are important to her.

Dinah

Dinah grew up in a Hassidic Orthodox Jewish home, with parents that mostly shared the level of commitment she has today. She is 29 years old and has been married to her husband for 12 years. Having been educated in an Orthodox Jewish day school, she is learned, though she did not always connect to the practice of Judaism as strongly as she does now. There was a time during her teenage years when she chose to look

critically at the level of religiosity she wanted to keep and through her own searching and experimental process grew into her current level of practice. She and her husband have been living in the Cleveland area for about 8 years and have 3 children. Dinah appeared quite comfortable in how she sees herself and what she believes her role to be in her world. She seems proud to have found this balance despite being pushed in one direction or another by others, as she was growing up.

Leah

Leah, a 70 year old mother of two, has a rich background of spirituality that was first stimulated when she was in graduate school. Her parents both grew up in Orthodox Jewish homes, but chose to not take that path for themselves when they reached the age of independence. However, things changed for Leah when her mother died. She began exploring in earnest in her mid twenties, looking into other religions such as Buddhism, in addition to other branches of Judaism. Her first husband was not Orthodox but passed away after only a few years of marriage. When she met her second husband, he was exploring Orthodox Judaism and she began that journey with him. Together they agreed to live an Orthodox Jewish lifestyle and have kept that through their 39 years of marriage. While Leah appears to be at peace in general with her choice to live as an Orthodox Jew, she seems to still struggle with aspects of that life. Once she feels comfortable, she is not shy about sharing her particular views on Judaism, her community, and most any area, many of which are colored by her varied experiences.

Levi

Levi, 34 years old, grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home. His father is a pulpit Rabbi and he was raised in a home where religion and spirituality were frequent topics of conversation. While he did not choose to continue in his father's footsteps professionally, he still views Jewish outreach as an important part of his life. He is a thoughtful person that frequently makes time to discuss Jewish philosophical topics with family and friends. He and his wife have been married for 10 years and together they have 3 children. Levi at times struggled to put his thoughts into words, while at other times he was eloquent. Clearly, though there was a lot of depth behind his thoughts. He appeared to be still searching for his particular path within Orthodox Judaism.

Ben

Ben grew up in a Conservative Jewish home. His parents introduced him to the different Jewish Holidays and family occasions were often centered around these. He first became interested in more deeply exploring his roots on a trip to Israel with Bnai Brith when he was in high school. His journey began there and he slowly began experimenting with other parts of Judaism, such as wearing a head covering, keeping Kosher [Jewish dietary laws] and keeping Shabbos [Sabbath]. He was strongly influenced by a Rabbi he sought out while in college. It was this Rabbi's warmth and vibrancy that led him to decide that he wanted this lifestyle for himself and his family. He is 40 years old and has been married 15 years. He and his wife have four children. Ben had a warmth and vibrancy that came across immediately. He demands a lot of

himself both religiously and professionally and sometimes puts these requirements on those around him.

Naftali

Naftali's journey towards Orthodox Judaism began with his exploration of meditation. He became an expert at meditation in his twenties, even traveling to India to study in an ashram for nine months. With this spiritual background, Naftali began to explore the spirituality within Judaism once he returned from India. He connected himself to a few people from whom he could learn Jewish texts and slowly began changing his lifestyle. He has lived as an Orthodox Jew for the last forty years. Clearly having a lot of varied life experience to draw on, Naftali was sure of himself and his place in the world. He had strong opinions that he stood by, feeling they were gained through experiences throughout his life and therefore battle tested. He is 74 years old and has been married for 35 years.

Avi

Avi, 40 years old, grew up with a father that was a Rabbi of a Conservative Jewish congregation. For Avi there was no specific time when he began to consider himself an Orthodox Jew, as he was keeping many of the tenets of Orthodox Judaism his whole life. There were some differences that he chose to take upon himself in college until one day he realized that he leaned more towards Orthodox than Conservative Judaism. Sincerity in Judaism was always paramount for Avi, and he has always been thoughtful of doing what he chooses to do in Judaism because he believes it is the right thing to do, from his own estimation or Divinely commanded. Avi is the father of four

children and has been married to his wife for 12 years. Avi, obviously very bright, also had a kindness to him that helps him easily put anyone off their guard. He enjoys the life he has built for himself, it being based on his search for sincerity in the areas most important to him.

This study focused on the interviews of eight participants. These four women and four men were members of the Cleveland Orthodox Jewish community. Their interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Through data analysis using the process of open coding this researcher organized the data into four major themes as well as two minor themes. The detailed presentation of these themes follows.

Orthodox Judaism's Interaction with Marriage

The data gathered from the participants painted a rich and varied picture, allowing many ideas to emerge. Many of the thoughts from the participants had elements that were similar to each other and these have been organized into general or primary themes. Overall, it seems clear from the data that Orthodox Judaism plays a significant role in child and adult development as well as having a significant impact on the marriage of the participants. Similarly, the marriage relationship interacted significantly with individuals' experiences of Orthodox Judaism.

After the data was coded and organized many themes emerged. After looking at the themes from multiple viewpoints, most of the themes fit into broader themes that directly speak to the focus of the study. More specifically, four primary themes were found, each of which can be further separated into two or more sub-themes. The four primary themes center around the impact that Orthodox Judaism and marriage have on

each other. The effect of these two factors is looked at in a bidirectional manner. In other words, how does Orthodox Judaism impact marriage and how does marriage impact Orthodox Judaism. To further separate these themes, the impact of these two factors on each other is separated into the positive and negative impact each factor has on the other. Therefore the four themes consist of the following: (a) an individual's experience of Orthodox Judaism enhances the marriage relationship, (b) marriage enhances an individual's experience of Orthodox Judaism, (c) an individual's experience of Orthodox Judaism detracts from the marriage relationship, and (d) marriage detracts from an individual's experience of Orthodox Judaism.

The following presentation of data will take each of the themes and share more specific sub-themes for each of the above mentioned themes. In addition to the four above themes, two more ideas were apparent that while they did not directly speak to the above themes, were nevertheless important, being that multiple participants spoke about them unprompted. Each of the four major themes will be presented along with their sub-themes and supporting data. Following this, the two other minor themes will be presented as well.

Theme 1: Individual's Experience of Orthodox Judaism Enhances Marriage

One of the central ideas around which this study was formed was that Orthodox Judaism would interact with marriage. The first theme looks at how each participant's Orthodox Judaism enhances marriage. From the interviews, it was found that there are multiple ways in which an individual's experience of Orthodox Judaism enhances marriage. The first way has to do with attraction and choice of one's marriage partner.

This formed the basis for the first sub-theme. Secondly, it was found that Orthodox Judaism serve as a foundation to marriage, thereby enhancing it by providing structure. Lastly, the religious and spiritual aspects of Orthodox Judaism serve to help the relationship grow and deepen. All of the above speak to the role that Orthodox Judaism plays in enhancing a marriage, thereby speaking to the interplay of Orthodox Judaism and marriage in general.

Orthodox Judaism in choice of partner. The beginning of a relationship that leads to marriage starts with attraction. Once this is established everything that happens contributes to the choice the partners make to start their marriage. Throughout the interviews one of the ideas to emerge was that Orthodox Judaism played a role in a number of the subjects' initial attraction to their marriage partners, and further along in the process, in their choice of those partners for marriage.

Many of the participants had much to say about first meeting their partners. As Chana shared that when she first met her husband she began to get impressions of him religiously that she liked. "As we're dating, I'm like oh my God you're learning 12 hours a week? I didn't know that." Her understanding of herself led her to feel what she needed. She said,

[I needed someone] very learned because I was in Jewish education and wanted someone to be able to talk to. When we first went out I was like you haven't read the lonely man of faith by Rabbi Soloveitchik, I can't talk to you. I was such a snob. But this was very important to me because that's what I was engaging in.

The more she got to know him and his Orthodox Jewish religious and spiritual background, the more it struck her. "It's hitting me; I'm going to end up with this guy. He's like the most complex Jew." At the same time it wasn't only his religious level that attracted her, but his personal approach to religion. She remarked,

He would always err on the side of making sure no one was hurt in our family because of our religion. And covering up things that he would do religiously because they may feel alienated by it. A very special person really.

For Chana, it's not simply that the religion and spirituality of Orthodox Judaism are positive and the more her partner displayed, the more attracted she was. It's complex and comes with some cost. But overall, it's foundational:

His commitment to religion is something I'm drawn to, it's a huge part of what attracts me to him. It's also a point of tension obviously, so it's like both, but it has to be there for me to feel respect. And respect is necessary for love.

As she later summarized these feelings,

I dated the people who were all right on paper but then there was no chemistry. With [my husband], he had all the things on paper but then there was this whole separate element which attracted me to him that was this chemistry. Or maybe it was his approach to religion that was part of the chemistry. He was so incredibly sincere and complex.

Also, "I felt like he got what I felt was most important about living an upstanding good life. That to me was the most necessary component of attraction." Similarly, for Levi it

was more nuanced than simply lining up on the religious and spiritual matters of Orthodox Judaism:

I was looking for someone who would share those values or that quest, even though probably when I was looking I wasn't feeling how I do today. But I think at its core I was looking for someone who had a similar background, who would understand that, and understand that there is that desire.

When Levi did finally meet his partner he found himself attracted to her inspiration. "I feel like when we met she was more inspired than I was. I actually really liked that. She was very inspired when I met her."

For Avi, initially, in contrast to Chana above who focused on the Orthodox Judaism of her partner that she found attractive, focusing on what he wanted religiously and spiritually helped him focus on what he wanted in a partner:

After a certain point I realized the girl I want to hook up with is not necessarily the girl I want to marry... It was more like who do I think is the woman who will be the better partner for me.

His dating process evolved and helped him understand more what he was looking for spiritually in a partner:

By the time I got to 27 I just ended up dating girls who were more classically religious. I can't tell you if they were more spiritual. Not until [my wife] who did feel more spiritual. She was on a whole different level, which is why I was attracted to her.

Similarly, Naftali was attracted to the nuanced spirituality of his wife. As he put it,

In terms of choosing, an interesting fact is that [my wife] and I learned to meditate on the same day four years before we met. My whole view about how things work, the spiritual nature of things, Divine providence and all that. I remember I used to say I was always looking for Nirvana Schwartz. [My wife] is the epitome of that. Having that same view about the way things work, which we do, obviously that makes things better than when a person doesn't look at it that way. Interestingly, for Naftali, there wasn't any of the religious part that attracted him to his wife:

[My wife] wasn't religious at all when I met her. She didn't know anything. We made an agreement she would keep Shabbos [Sabbath], that would make it so we could at least live together. Spiritually she was past me.

This was different from Dinah who was initially more interested in the religious parts of Orthodox Judaism of her husband's personality. "It was more the religious aspect. It's more, in what place religiously is my husband. What do I want him to be?"

Orthodox Judaism as a foundation of marriage. Also contributing to the theme of how an individual's experience of Orthodox Judaism enhances one's marriage relationship is the idea of Orthodox Judaism as a foundation for marriage. What is meant by the term foundation are things such as principles, beliefs, activities, and anything that speaks to how Orthodox Judaism creates a structure for married life. This foundation or structure is thought to provide stability and strength to a marriage, thereby enhancing it.

The idea of Orthodox Judaism serving as a foundation to marriage was prevalent for most of the interviewees. A number of them spoke about the role they chose to allow

Orthodox Judaism play in establishing the principles on which they based their marriage. Once she and her husband started dating seriously, Dinah became aware that they needed to figure out together what type of life they wanted together, religiously and spiritually. "We started together kind of just hanging out and then when we realized we might want to get married that we have to start with certain foundations and we should take things upon ourselves." Naftali also had this attitude, but for him it was more built on necessity, because he felt the religion dictates the religious level of the person one can marry. As he put it,

Let's say one person becomes religious and the other person doesn't, where they do the very minimum. That's a lot of stress in a relationship. A lot of relationships end because of that. If a man becomes religious and a woman doesn't, you can't even live with her. That's the end of that. If you want to live a Jewish life and your wife doesn't go to the mikvah [ritual bath], you can't. If your wife doesn't keep kosher, you can't eat there. That's the end of the relationship.

Leah shared a similar view that sharing religion is important, but for her it is more important there be a general commitment to it, not that the level matches up. "The religion is very important in our marriage. It is a common meeting ground. We are at different places with it but we are both committed to it in our own way." She put it even more bluntly. "Let's just say he ever did want to stop being frum [religious, Orthodox], which he doesn't, that would probably be the end of our relationship."

While the particular level of Orthodox Judaism was a major focus when dating and early on in the marriage, Chana pointed out that while still fundamental and of high

importance, it is more in the background at this point. "The interesting thing is that now that we're married I don't think it actually comes up so often. It's just who we are and what we do." She noticed the difference between now and back then. "I was so anxious about it. And when we got married it just kind of fell to the wayside. It is really important; it's just not something I revisit on a regular basis." Speaking more to the present,

I feel like it's just so embedded into our whole fabric of living. I feel like our whole relationship is hinged around being frum [religious]. We are a frum couple. So much of my life for sure is related to religion, or being a professional Jew.

She felt Orthodox Judaism tied in so deeply to her marriage that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between them.

It's so hard for me to distinguish between my relationship and religion. It's just the foundation of it and it feels so natural for us to have that built into our life. Like without it I would feel very lost. Not that [my husband] at his essence isn't who he is. I am who I am. But it's so much about the structure of our lives, everyday structure, like it would be a soul without a body almost, you know?

Ben brought up the point that while it is important to match religiously, there is room for each person to have a particular role within that.

It was always important to me to make sure that you kind of mesh religiously with your spouse because you can have conflict in a marriage if you don't. You want to make sure you're aligned. She worries about the more practical stuff,

shidduchim [arranging a marriage partner]. I don't think about shidduchim. I know it's on her mind. When the time comes and all this stuff has to be done I'll say, oh my God, how come nobody told me. I'll know she'll have thought about it for however many years. My job, the way I see it, is to make sure that when she makes a good shidduch, I can write whatever check has to be written.

Levi felt that the religion of Orthodox Judaism acted as a stabilizing force early on in the marriage. It was probably a mainstay, in a background way.

[Religion] provided us with something that was comfortable, that was good, and allowed us to maintain our identity. I think it added stability, sure. We had a lot of upheaval in general. I think that that added a sense of normalcy. I mean, we've always looked forward to Shabbos. It was always something we really enjoyed.

He felt the spirituality of Orthodox Judaism was not as necessary foundationally.

For me it's important to be on the same or a similar page because religion plays such a base roll. In spirituality, I think it would be great but I don't think it's as important. I think it [spirituality] may be more of a solo quest.

Avi put it beautifully when he stated, "the fact that two people can find each other and be happy and married, to me is a spiritual event." Even before looking at what particular Orthodox Jewish religious or spiritual level the partners agree upon, the marriage itself is built on a belief about marriage. As he shared,

I do consider myself lucky that I had the chance to marry [my wife]. Not only that two people could find each other but I feel lucky that [my wife] married me. I don't think about that all the time. Most of the time you don't. Every once in a

while you go, clearly this is from Hashem [God], because I'm a shmuck, there has to be some yad Hashem [hand of God] here.

Looking at the role marriage and family plays in a similar way, from Avi,

Having a family is a spiritual endeavor affecting Jewish religious behavior. That marriage is a spiritual act. Not the act of marriage, but the act of the continuity of Jewish religion for the next generation could be considered spiritual. On a more practical level, I think it would be very tough if you were shomer Shabbos [observant of the Sabbath], but your spouse was not. There are marriages when that does happen, but then one person clearly has to make that sacrifice to say I value this strongly but I still want to be with you even though you don't. To me, that would be very tough. I feel commanded in my religious observance and I appreciate someone who feels that same kabalas ol [acceptance of the yoke of Heaven]. I dated women who weren't frum [religious]. They definitely wouldn't have considered themselves observant. In the beginning you are like, I think we could make this work. But then it's like I know this isn't going to work out. It's always bothering me, you don't need to be exactly where I am, I don't think anyone is exactly where the other person is, but if we're not in the same ballpark...

More directly, he stated, "we wanted spouses that wanted that same thing too. It's not just we wanted to be with a good person, we wanted to be with someone who wanted to be religious and lead a religious life."

Growth and deepening of marriage through Orthodox Judaism. Continuing to look at how Orthodox Judaism enhances marriage, much of the data gathered points to

how it leads to growth and deepening of the marriage relationship. This was the third sub theme to emerge in the area of Orthodox Judaism enhancing marriage. While any of a number of shared interests or hobbies might provide an avenue for a couple to grow together, religion and spirituality appear to provide a particularly powerful medium for deepening a couple's relationship. This is likely owing to Orthodox Judaism being of particular importance to those interviewed. This sub-theme was one of the strongest observed, with examples appearing in every one of the interviews.

The mikvah, or ritual bath, is something used by women around the time of their menstrual cycle. The laws governing the mikvah and its role in marriage spell out certain times of the month when a husband and wife can be together and other times they cannot even touch each other. Some of the interviewees find these rules particularly challenging, but Ben shared his view on how it enhances the marriage. "When she comes back from the mikvah, that's very enhanced. I recognize that the time apart, when we get back together is exciting." Chana shared something similar. "The laws of ritual purity in our marriage for sure brings us closer together, recognizing the place of God, even within our sex life. That is something God is in charge of really, is a big part of."

The role of Shabbos [Sabbath] and how it enhances married life surfaced a few times. From Chana,

So much of our Shabbos observance connects me to [my husband]. Without that day I wouldn't feel as... like I said, I feel one of our biggest stresses is time and I think that just creates time. For us to sit and be together. That for sure is huge in our lives, in the way that we take time out for each other.

Ben also talked about the enhancing aspects of observing Shabbos [Sabbath] and Holidays.

Friday night and Shabbos is great. We had a nice meal Friday night. We sit together at the table. The kids want to run off and play Legos, that's really nice. [My daughter] sits there with us. She'll sit there forever with us, and talk. My parents come. Holidays. Probably if we weren't religious we would still have Pesach and Rosh Hashana, but we wouldn't have it every week. So I really like that.

More philosophically,

I think the religion does help us connect because I think we have a longer term view. We are a link in a chain from our family going on. And we need to keep our kids strong so they can continue to be a link in that strong Jewish chain. We both hope to have Jewish grandchildren, Jewish great-grandchildren. We are actively doing something together to enhance that.

Growing together early on in the relationship was of particular importance to some. For example, Rivka shared,

Because we began growing together, it definitely helped. Had I not and he kept growing it definitely wouldn't have worked. At that point he didn't know much more than I did, he may have known a little bit more but it wasn't leaps and bounds. So I think as we kept growing together and learning together and taking on more things together, I think it helped. If one of us stopped in any way I don't think the relationship would have continued.

Likewise, for Dinah, growing together early in the marriage was paramount.

We grow together. We talked about this when we were dating and in the early stages of marriage. [My husband] always wanted to be a rabbi and I'm like, I don't think I have that in me. But whenever he does something like that, I'm like full on. Because it makes him happy, and if it makes me happy then we connect. That's what brings us together.

Also,

If you listen to your husband's desires, and you hear that he is super into davening [prayer], and even if you're not, try to get spirituality out of that, try to get a good feeling out of that. Go to his davenings, listen to him, close your eyes, even if you don't feel it make yourself feel it because you are together, this is your thing.

In Rivka's life now, the theme continues through learning Orthodox Jewish religious or spiritual subject matter. "Whenever I get a chance to go learn something I definitely feel more connected. When I go and I feel connected, I just learned something and then I can go home and share that and feel connected to him." In a similar way, Levi spoke about exploring Orthodox Jewish spirituality together in this way. "It adds another layer. It creates a space for you to explore together, another dimension... We engage on that level."

For Naftali, shared spirituality plays a more important role in enhancing his marriage by giving a shared outlook on life.

[Spirituality] enhances it. A common ground. You see things the same way. I couldn't imagine what it would be like to be with someone that didn't have that

viewpoint. It would take away a very big part of life. At least to look at it that way.

Similarly for Chana, Orthodox Judaism can lend perspective in times of stress. "During moments of stress it has been very helpful to have religion, not so much as a halachic [Jewish law] thing but as a this is my greater purpose right now." An example,

[My husband] has been unemployed twice since we've been married and both times I felt a religious purpose to it, like my role here is to be as supportive as possible. Not just because it's a better way of being happier in the short run, but also as a more macro rule in this marriage. Like why am I here, why is this happening, I don't know. But I can make it better by being a better support system, having it bring out our strengths during this time as opposed to our weaknesses.

Theme 2: Marriage Enhances an Individual's Experience of Orthodox Judaism

The second theme to surface from the data gathered expresses the idea that the marriage relationship enhances an individual's experience of Orthodox Judaism. This speaks to the bidirectional nature of how these two factors impact each other. In particular, two specific ideas from the data support this theme. Firstly, as a couple has children and participates in raising them and their growth, this appears to enhance one's involvement with Orthodox Judaism. Secondly, a number of participants shared experiences having to do with how their individual maintenance and growth of Orthodox Judaism was in part because of their marriage relationship.

Children as impetus for increasing involvement in Orthodox Judaism.

While the original premise of this research suspected that Orthodox Judaism would interact with marriage, one idea that consistently surfaced was the role that children, and more particularly a couple's focus on their children, led to significantly more involvement in the religious and spiritual activities of Orthodox Judaism. This strong and consistent relationship suggests that the desire to transmit religious belief and practice from one generation to the next is deeply ingrained into the culture. But even more than this, people appear to find it more meaningful to strengthen their own belief, practice, and spiritual outlook when they know it will affect how their children see them as parents and what they are likely to gain from those experiences. This theme surfaced in six of the eight interviews.

Avi pointed out the difference he felt as a child about the Jewish Holidays as compared to how he feels now, and how he wants to transmit that excitement to his children. "I remember as a kid just being more excited about Yom Tov [Jewish Holidays] and Shabbos. Now it's like, okay you have your house to clean for Pesach [Passover]." He continued,

I become more focused on their spiritual development and their enjoyment and I want my kids to like and enjoy and be happy about being Jewish. So I've become more focused on that. If all your kids remember about Pesach [Passover] is that it's miserable then you didn't do the right thing.

The idea of modeling religious excitement as a couple was important to Dinah. "It shows our children that is what mommy and daddy connect over, over the holy good stuff. And

that part is important to me." Rivka shared the enjoyment she gets seeing her children's progress in their religious growth.

I do really get nachas [pride] when I see them come home from school and tell me things they learned and I see things they do and I see certain values that they have. I think it's because of the religion. I think that's really a good thing.

For Chana, the pride of good parenting is hearing the Orthodox Jewish outlook coming unprompted from her children.

It's something we would strongly reinforce to our children. You can't talk back to your teacher. I'll tell you a moment that made me really proud. One of my daughter's teachers, she's a five-year-old, the teacher asked how do you see the Torah in your life, or something like that. And she answered, because when your mommy says something you have to listen because that's what it says in the Torah. And I was really happy. That is something we are really reinforcing at home. It isn't just something we are saying because it's us, it is Hashem [God] who is saying it. It's how we talk to our children all the time.

Another area where children have helped Chana is in how she views the different roles that men and women have in Orthodox Judaism. Being a wife and mother has given her a different viewpoint on differences in Jewish law between men and women.

Having children has shifted a lot for me and I think that has made me much more mellow in my frustration towards certain halachos [Jewish laws]...Thankfully I feel much more at peace with my role in religion. I think it's catered for someone

at my stage in life for my place in life. Not being able to practice it would feel really alienating from religion even more.

Also,

The way the halacha [Jewish law] is differentiated has so much to do with women being moms, and just not having the luxury to hear 100 kolos [blasts from the ram's horn] or take a lulav [palm frond] every day of Sukkos [Jewish Holiday]. I still make my best effort to do those things but I definitely feel like because of the overwhelming-ness of children, the halacha [Jewish law] is set up with tremendous rachamim [mercy]. That's how I view it now. Before I felt like I'm just left out, I would feel so much more connected if only... Now, I feel thank you Hashem [God]. I couldn't do that if I needed to. I choose my children first.

Passing on the traditions begins in childhood and is an important goal for many parents. As Avi notes, "my kids can also feel that chosen-ness. Part of that chosen-ness is for them to continue it on. I want to help my kids carry that on as well." Likewise for Dinah,

We're raising our family to be religious. I think that when the children see their parents excited over religious things it keeps them religious all their life. I don't want to force my children into a box. I want to show my children that we feel passionately, that we feel excited about this. They should want it. It can be exciting and happy and it keeps you grounded and it gives you... when you're given 10 choices it's hard to choose. When you're given two it's easy. I like this and I don't like this, done.

Not everyone feels as inspired all the time as they once did. Rivka shared that part of what keeps her from dropping certain religious laws or obligations is how she fears it would affect her children.

There are many times when I wonder, why am I doing this? It is stressful.

Pesach [Passover], even Shabbos [Sabbath] which I love, Friday becomes this insane marathon. So why am I doing this? I look at my parents who sit for hours and watch TV every night. They don't have the obligations that we have... I'm raising a family and have all these religious obligations. Sometimes it's like why am I doing this? But then I think about my children. I think, I don't want to screw them up. I think it would screw them up. They are so ingrained in the religion that if I woke up and said that's it guys, tomorrow I'm taking my sheitel [wig] off and we're no longer religious, they would have mental breakdowns. I don't think they can handle it. It would totally mess them up and I could never do that to my kids.

Marriage enhancing individual's growth and maintenance of Orthodox

Judaism. Orthodox Judaism strongly influenced each of the participants in their process of dating, choosing who to marry, and how they are in the marriage. However the marriage has in turn also affected their Orthodox Judaism. This was a hypothesis of this study from the beginning and indeed showed up in every interview. This theme found that one's growth or maintenance within the realm of Orthodox Judaism is strongly influenced by marriage.

Some spoke bluntly about how much of what they choose to do religiously within Orthodox Judaism is done because they chose to commit to their partner with the understanding that this was the life they would lead. From Leah,

When [my husband] and I got married, he was frum [religious] and I was not. I promised keeping Shabbos [Sabbath] and the holidays, keeping a kosher house, going to the mikvah [ritual bath]. That's what I've promised and that's what I've kept.

Later she shared more detail,

Then, [my husband] was introducing me to all this. There was no way I was going to do this. It was impossible. But then, I did a lot of studying very quickly. It was all of the halacha [Jewish law] and what you're supposed to do. I kind of thought, ritual can be good, it has a rhythm. It answers every question.

In a similar way, Naftali said,

If you have a wife that is very careful about stuff, you are forced into doing it. If your wife eats and then she benches [says the blessing after a meal] afterwards, but you don't feel like it, you are going to bench. The wife sets the level.

Chana felt there are times when she pushes herself to do more, because of her partner.

I stretch myself to be more like [my husband] on a religious level. I think that helped me feel more bonded like a there is a reason why he's my bashert [predestined partner]. I want to grow in this way, in this midah [attribute]. Or there's a reason why he's wrong and I have to stand up for it because there is a

religious obligation to be an ezer kenegdo [partner]. And he'll say you're right I have to listen to you, there's something I have to learn from you.

Simply being married has strongly influenced Chana's connection to God. She spoke about being single for a long time and it being quite hard for her. When she finally did find her husband, it influenced her spirituality.

Not being married really detracted from feeling comfortable. You always have family, you're a daughter, but I wanted my own family and I definitely feel being married enhances the whole connection to Yiddishkeit [Judaism], my love for it. Just generally feeling God's hand in my life. Whenever I talk, so many of my stories about feeling God in my life go back to [my husband] and feeling that he is my bashert [predestined partner]. For me that is such a clear point with God, where he played such an apparent role in my life.

Similarly, for Avi,

I feel lucky that [my wife] married me. I don't think about that all the time, most of the time you don't. Every once in a while you go, clearly this is from Hashem [God], because I'm a shmuck, there has to be some yad Hashem [hand of God] here.

Partners influence in each other, sometimes directly, other times indirectly. Ben finds himself sometimes taking the direct approach, wanting to help along his wife's Orthodox Jewish spirituality.

It's still just important to me to align as best we can. Even this morning I urged my wife, you should come to shul [synagogue] and daven [pray]. She hasn't been

there in a while so I encourage her to. I want to make sure we're aligned. That's important. I want her to be happy.

He explained later about the importance of influencing each other spiritually and religiously.

We want to be connected to each other. We want to be the same. There's always one horse slightly ahead of the other. You want to make sure if you start to get too far apart you lose each other. You don't want to do that.

Some look at marriage as an opportunity to grow together. As Dinah noted, "It might have been a little like peer pressure on both ends but we did grow together. I want to do this, I want to do this, okay let's do this. There was never an argument; I don't want to do this." Also, "If he wants that, if he's excited about that, I'm full on. Because what do I have to lose." And,

I don't think I'm the type of person who says okay, I'm going to take something upon myself. But if my husband is excited about it and I'm doing it to enhance my marriage, I might just end up taking it upon myself.

As an example,

Friday night, I wouldn't normally daven [pray], but if I make time to go to his minyan [quorum for prayer] and I'm excited about it, I will be davening so I will be doing something more religious. Maybe it becomes a part of my routine. I go every week and then one week I have to stay home because whatever, maybe I'll even just daven at home.

Others expressed appreciation at being influenced by their partner to learn more. Rivka shared, "He probably pulls me more just because he has more opportunities to learn... So I think he's definitely always in the lead. But it keeps me trying to." Leah felt that her husband's spirituality served her need for spirituality.

In a way, if I want to get spiritual, he is doing it for the two of us. I don't have to do it because he does it and we are one light. Let him do it. I could never do it. I don't have that draw to it.

Also, "Without this relationship, I'm not sure how I would live as a Jew in the world."

On the other end, Levi expressed how being supported influences his pursuits.

If my partner wasn't as supportive or didn't encourage me to pursue what inspires me or didn't express support, I think that would put a damper on what I pursue, or at least put a different lens on it. It would affect the way I pursue that. I wouldn't feel as alive inside. I would probably feel more dead.

The challenges that come along with being married, not directly from the marriage, more the result of life together as a married couple, can also lead to changes in Orthodox Jewish spirituality. As Chana shared,

I remember when [my husband] was unemployed the first time I felt more compelled to be my best self on a spiritual level. There was a time when I felt like I was not living up to my expectations of being a supportive wife and I would read religious stuff to help me and that inspired me to be better and actually because it went down a little I felt more strongly that I had to do this from a religious perspective, not only from a feel better perspective. So a dip spiritually

sometimes pushes me, sometimes. It's always waxing and waning, relationships. Any relationship is. But I definitely feel like those times when I wane, it's helped me to wax.

Theme 3: Experience of Orthodox Judaism Detracts from Marriage

The stories told by the participants in this study did not only speak to the positive or enhancing aspects that Orthodox Judaism and marriage have on each other but also to ways in which they might detract from one another. This theme focused on how Orthodox Judaism detracts from the marriage relationship. The ways in which it detracts showed up in a number of areas allowing three major areas to emerge within this theme. The first area focused on how one's Orthodox Judaism practiced independent of one's partner may detract from the marriage relationship. Secondly, the areas of time, money, and effort in the context of Orthodox Jewish practice were analyzed as to how they may detract from marriage. Finally, Orthodox Judaism places restrictions on physical closeness during certain times and this appeared to detract from the marriage for some of the participants.

Orthodox Judaism without one's partner detracts from marriage. Most of us find it easier to keep to a routine, a new diet, or exercise commitment when done with a friend, coworker, or family. Gathering from the interviews, this is certainly true of Orthodox Judaism within marriage. An above theme mentioned how partners encourage each other's commitment and growth of Orthodox Judaism. There were also many instances where the participants spoke about increasing their experience of Orthodox Judaism on one's own or not being at the same place as one's partner, and how this

detracts from the relationship. This theme was mentioned at some level in most of the interviews and figured more prominently in four.

Dinah was aware of what her not sharing her husband's enthusiasm for something might do to their marriage.

If, let's say I did resent Jewish Holidays, and [my husband] is working so hard on this thing and I'm like do your thing, not supportive. I don't want to be part of it. Even if I don't want to be part of it, if I pretended that I want to be a part of it, it's good for a family, for a relationship. But if you are so not interested in showing that part, then you are hurting your marriage. Those little things keep you from falling apart. If what is interesting to him is not interesting to you, and you do your thing and you do your thing, then one day you'll wake up and be like what are we doing together.

While Dinah focused on the emotional impact to the relationship, Naftali focused on the religious practical challenges.

Let's say one person becomes religious and the other person doesn't, where they do the very minimum. That's a lot of stress in a relationship. A lot of relationships end because of that. If a man becomes religious and a woman doesn't, you can't even live with her. That's the end of that. If you want to live a Jewish life and your wife doesn't go to the mikvah [ritual bath], you can't. If your wife doesn't keep kosher, you can't eat there. That's the end of the relationship.

In a similar vein, from Avi,

I think it would be very tough if you were shomer Shabbos [kept the laws of Sabbath], but your spouse was not. There are marriages when that does happen, but then one person clearly has to make that sacrifice to say I value this strongly but I still want to be with you even though you don't. To me, that would be very tough.

He shared an example from his life.

In terms of hair covering for women, [my wife] is more knowledgeable than what I've learned. Based on my understanding, bedieved [only if necessary], you could show a tefach [handbreadth] of hair. But [my wife] would say lechatchila [ideally] you could show a tefach of hair. Something like that might bother me. So we kind of get in some of these arguments.

There can be a cyclical nature to the religion and spirituality of Orthodox Judaism, rising and falling over time. This rise and fall impacts the relationship. From Rivka,

It's cyclical. Sometimes you feel very connected to religion and other times you're not. For whatever reason, ups and downs, ups and downs. So I think that when one partner is not as connected to religion but the other is, I think sometimes that can be a difficult event. When you're both connected at the same time, on a high at the same time, I think there is more of a connection. When one is struggling a little bit and the other is not I think that can make it more challenging in the relationship.

Some of the participants recognize that they are not at the same place religiously or spiritually within Orthodox Judaism. For example Leah shared, "I know that if I was

where he is spiritually, our relationship would be much better.” Levi is aware that he is at a different place from his wife spiritually but is not sure it affects his marriage negatively, only that it would be nice if she did match him.

For me, a large part has been a solo journey in seeking out those who I’m connecting with at that level. Would I like for it to be my wife? Yeah, that would be cool too. Have I made the effort to seek her out in that way? Maybe I haven’t. Maybe that is something I should do.

On the other hand,

Being religious is more dependent on the marriage. In practice it’s very difficult to be religious or not be religious if your partner is really not at the same level.

It’s very difficult to do or not do what your partner is not doing. I think it would be very difficult to practice without your partner. I think that creates a lot of tension, especially if you have children, if you don’t practice the same. That sets you up for a lot of tension.

Commitments due to Orthodox Judaism detract from marriage. Three areas in particular came up for a few of the participants as areas of tension within marriage, brought on by Orthodox Jewish commitment. Time, money, and effort or energy around religious or spiritual pursuits connected to Orthodox Judaism do appear to detract, at times, from a couple's relationship. For some this was a theme that they struggled with regularly while for others it was only occasional. Four of the participants shared an aspect of this.

Being out at synagogue or other religious pursuits means not being home. In Orthodox Judaism, going to synagogue can be a twice a day ritual. Chana shared, "It does interact in that way, like if we fight about it, why are you always out and it is usually for a religious cause. But it's not like I would do it differently. It's just taking up a lot of time. I think time is a big stress in our marriage because there's never enough. A big thing that sucks up time is that he's often out doing things that require being out of the house for, like minyan [prayer at synagogue], learning, and a lot a lot of chessed [kind acts towards others]."

Levi also shared the tension around ritual prayer. "I think that there are moments of tension where you have religion competing with marriage. Like going to shul [synagogue] at inopportune times. That's a common tension." Likewise for Ben, "This morning I went to [the Rabbi's] shiur [class]. I'm going because I want to keep feeding the fire but I know it's time out of the house away from her and the kids. So it's a compromise."

Being an Orthodox Jew is an expensive proposition. The contrast of the cost of life while living an Orthodox Jewish life compared to not living this way was strong for Rivka, who did not grow up as an Orthodox Jew.

That's the biggest stress we have. I think because we are baal teshuvos [those that return to Orthodox Judaism] and knowing how we grew up and knowing that our parents were able to save a tremendous amount of money. Neither one of us had to pay for college or law school or grad school. It was paid for by our parents. None of us ever struggled growing up. You're not paying \$20 a pound for matzoh

[ritual crackers eaten on Passover]. You're not paying \$100 for a lemon [referring to an Esrog, used on the Holiday of Succos]. There are a lot of expenses. People have larger families so there are a lot of expenses to being religious.

She added,

Sometimes I joke and I say if I had known how expensive it was I don't think I would've chosen this life. Because everything is so beautiful in the [Rabbi's] home and they don't tell you about their finances and I know they are struggling more than we ever were.

Ben also shared his feelings about the stress from the cost of leading a religious life.

It's a source of stress. We both would like more physically but we have to devote that money to private schools. We see other people are living just fine and get a bill in the mail and it's just a number on the page and they don't care. And they're living great. That's a source of stress. Sometimes it's misaligned a little bit because I pay the bills and she doesn't. I get grumpy when I see a giant bill.

In regards to charity, from Chana, "We'll fight over how much tzedaka [charity] to give...

It does create more stress. You have to spend more money for food. You have to take more time away to get ready for Pesach [Passover]." Money came up again for Chana.

So the most stressful times in our marriage have been surrounding Yom Tov [Jewish Holidays] or Shabbos [Sabbath] and money as it relates to what should we spend it on and many of those things are religious obligations. [My husband] is a huge, huge lover of books and he has a huge seforim [Jewish sacred books]

collection. So that creates tension for me, spending so much time and money on his seforim. He wouldn't be so into that if he wasn't frum [an Orthodox Jew].

Restrictions because of Orthodox Judaism detract from marriage. One of the areas less known to those that are not Orthodox Jews are the laws surrounding ritual purity. The laws center around a woman's menstrual cycle and govern when a couple is allowed to be together. Just less than half of the days of each month are days a couple is not even allowed to hold hands. Some of the participants mentioned how a couple's separation due to these laws enhances the time when they are permitted to be together. Absence makes the heart grow fonder and it creates a sense of renewal each month. Others may feel that part too but still felt that there are times when it has detracted from their closeness or the relationship. This issue was mentioned in three of the interviews.

Ben clearly has mixed feelings about some of the religious laws around touching when his wife was giving birth to their first child.

We were very careful with the first baby. The water broke. You've got to stop holding her hand and this and that. Then it was a 24-hour labor and by the time she was done there was a C-section. And so you go into the operating room and she's laid out on the table and they have the curtain up and I saw the inside of her abdomen which is far more than I ever wanted to see. How could I not hold her hand at that point? You know? They're pulling our kids out and she's sitting there. I held her hand.

More generally he shared,

It was very difficult to not be able to physically connect. There's this book that [my wife] picked up about the five love languages. And I know one of my languages is touch. And so to not be able to connect that way, that was a challenge. Some of the restrictions on touch sometimes can be a challenge.

To be accurate, Ben didn't choose to phrase this as detracting from his relationship with his wife. "I don't know if it detracts from the relationship per se, but it's a challenge. It's a challenge. It's a far more difficult challenge than not going to Burger King and ordering a cheeseburger."

Theme 4: Marriage Detracts from Orthodox Judaism

The final theme to deal with the interaction of Orthodox Judaism and marriage focused on how marriage detracts from an individual's pursuit and growth in Orthodox Judaism. There were two sub-themes from the interview data that spoke to this area. The first looked at the time one takes for marriage, as well as other obligations due to marriage, and how this detracts from religious and spiritual pursuits within Orthodox Judaism. Secondly, a number of the participants spoke about the challenge of being single in Orthodox Jewish life. This relates to the above theme because marriage is somewhat looked to as a requirement within Orthodox Jewish life and therefore this aspect, being married, detracts for many unmarried individuals from their experience of Orthodox Judaism. Though all of the participants were married, many of them were able to speak about this since there were sometimes relatively extended time periods when they were single, prior to marriage. Also, some of the participants shared their

observations of others they know closely that are not married and how they view and relate to this.

Commitments of marriage detract from Orthodox Judaism. Being married brings commitments of time and other obligations along with it. Whether it is picking up the children from school or watching a movie together at the end of a long day, choosing to do these things means one is choosing to not do other things. It was interesting to hear from the participants how this aspect of marriage detracted from their religious or spiritual pursuits within Orthodox Judaism. These concerns were present in four of the interviews.

One of the things that helps Rivka maintain her level of Orthodox Jewish spirituality, and thereby her religiosity, is the chance to learn something new, something to inspire her. She shared that these days she usually does not find the time to indulge in this way. "I know it keeps me going and I don't get it enough. Religiously, spiritually too. It all ties in you know. Life is not easy. I think you need that constant refreshing learning, something new, something interesting." Also,

I know [my husband] wants me to listen [to Jewish themed classes] but I don't have the time. He has a half hour on the train on the way there and the way back home. And he just can listen and decompress. I don't have that. I leave when my kids leave and I'm home when they're home. It's not like I can excuse myself and then go listen for a half hour. It's just not going to work. I just don't have that that hour a day.

Perhaps Avi said it most poignantly,

Look marriage isn't in a vacuum. Its marriage combined with kids combined with... as I said before I don't feel as spiritual as I once did and I can tell it's just because I have obligations. Feeling spiritual almost feels like a luxury. The person who has difficulties and feels spiritual, that's a truly special person. To keep up with my life, it kind of saps some of the spirituality out of it.

Ben spoke about choosing to spend time with his wife at the end of the day, rather than going out to learn something religious or spiritual.

If it's more nighttime stuff, I try to guard some of that time for us. If at 10 o'clock at night we can have the kids in bed and just sit together on the couch for an hour, watching a TV show or whatever, that's a good thing. If something chips at that, we both try to guard that.

It is important to note that although this choice prevents him from pursuing something religious or spiritual within Orthodox Judaism, he consciously makes that choice and is happy with the results of that choice. Chana was able to paint a picture of the feelings she has when her partner wishes to spend time out of the house on religious or spiritual things.

Now it's like you're frumkeit [Jewishness] is so annoying. You are always out of the house. It's such a common theme in our fighting. It's something that comes up all of the time. It interacts in that way. It doesn't interact in like why are you doing it, or I want you to do it differently. It just sometimes gets in the way, there is so much to do, and I wish he was just around more, to talk to, to have him around.

Avi noticed his priorities shifting from when he was single.

Now that I have five other people living with me, even in terms of marriage, you can't just be focused on yourself, whether it's practical things or something as esoteric as spiritual things. I find that it kind of gets in the way of spirituality. I can't just tell my wife there is going to be a kumzitz [gathering to sing soulful songs]. I'm going to be gone for two hours because I want to go reach a new spiritual high.

In a similar vein, Rivka shared,

There are opportunities out there. They have these nshei Shabbatons [women's gatherings over the Sabbath] once or twice a year. And I think for me I would get a tremendous amount out of going. But I wouldn't go because I don't want to leave my family and there's also the financial cost.

During the birth of his first child, Ben was challenged religiously by his desire to connect to his wife during the delivery, a time when touching is restricted according to Jewish law.

We were very careful with the first baby. The water broke. You've got to stop holding her hand and this and that. Then it was a 24-hour labor and by the time she was done there was a C-section. And so you go into the operating room and she's laid out on the table and they have the curtain up and I saw the inside of her abdomen which is far more than I ever wanted to see. How could I not hold her hand at that point? You know? They're pulling our kids out and she's sitting there. I held her hand.

Not being encouraged by his partner to pursue his religious and spiritual interests was something Levi felt would detract from his pursuits in this area and also contribute to a lack of well-being.

If my partner wasn't as supportive or didn't encourage me to pursue what inspires me or didn't express support, I think that would put a damper on what I pursue, or at least put a different lens on it. It would affect the way I pursue that. I wouldn't feel as alive inside. I would probably feel more dead.

While this was not the case for him, he was aware of the potential effects one partner could have on the other. Similarly, he shared,

In practice it's very difficult to be religious or not be religious if your partner is really not at the same level. It's very difficult to do or not do what your partner is not doing. I think it would be very difficult to practice without your partner. I think that creates a lot of tension, especially if you have children, if you don't practice the same. That sets you up for a lot of tension.

Necessity of marriage detracts from single Orthodox Jewish experience.

Through speaking about marriage, inevitably the time before marriage came up and how it contrasted with being married. An interesting theme that arose was the particular challenges faced by single people in maintaining their Orthodox Jewish level. A number of the participants felt that the culture around Orthodox Judaism does not lend itself well to being single after a certain age. Five of the participants brought up this issue. This theme arose organically as there was no particular interview question focused on this

area. This area of interest is included in this theme since it is the strong emphasis of marriage that can harm not only married partners but unmarried individuals as well.

Shabbos [Sabbath] is about resting on the seventh day. It begins on Friday night at sundown and continues until nightfall of Saturday. Yom Tov [Jewish Holidays] is similar in practice but can begin any day of the week and these days are peppered throughout the year. They are days when families go to synagogue to pray as a community and then make their way to large meals prepared in advance. Many people will have these large meals with many guests or be invited to someone's house as a guest. This process of hosting meals and being a guest at meals is reciprocal. Sometimes a family hosts and other weeks they are invited out to others. Chana reminisced about the difficulty she faced on Shabbos and Yom Tov as an unmarried woman.

Before I was married Yom Tov and Shabbos were so stressful for me. I would be resentful of them. Like I don't have a family to be with right now and it's such a pain to get home all the time. I felt like I was a pariah to not be married. It was so obvious to me that I should have been married in those moments and it was so painful at times. Those would definitely be a struggle for my sense of connection to ruchniyus [spirituality]. I now fit into the mold the system is created for.

Avi shared this awkwardness around Shabbos and Yom Tov.

Between being an adolescent and getting married, Holidays were a tougher time. It depends how old I was. Like from twenty two to twenty five Yom Tov was fine. But as you got older Yom Tov became more difficult because you are that

single guy. I didn't get married until thirty. So it kind of got weirder just being home for Yom Tov. Then you're just trying to get back to work.

In a similar way Ben shared,

If I was single, I think it would be hard to stay this religious because being religious and religious life focus on family. Frankly, I think if you're a single guy and forty, where are you going to have Shabbos? Where are you going to do all of these things? Someone is going to have you at their Shabbos table every week? I guess if I could write a big enough check to a Rabbi it could be with a real smile.

Leah hinted at the difficulty as well. "I thought about it hundreds of times, if I wasn't married to [my husband] what would I do?" Also, "Without this relationship, I'm not sure how I would live as a Jew in the world."

Dinah also spoke about the challenges of Shabbos and Yom Tov as a single person, but from a different angle. She has noticed how it has affected the religious and spiritual level of a few of the people close to her that are not married.

I'm sure you grow more once you're married in both the religious and spiritual. I see my sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law who aren't married and they're well into their twenties. I have a brother-in-law who's thirty already, and a sister-in-law who is twenty seven, and I see that Friday night, if you're not making a Shabbos meal then you're not keeping Shabbos. And I'm sure if he was married he would be keeping Shabbos. The spirituality, I can't say what would happen in that feeling aspect, but would he be doing more things because he's married? I do

think he wants to follow those rules. But it's very hard to do it alone. Shabbos alone is very ugh. I'm happy I was never really there.

Minor Themes

While the above themes looked in detail at how marriage and Orthodox Judaism impact each other in both a positive and negative fashion, the following two ideas differ in that they do not necessarily have to do with the interaction of marriage and Orthodox Judaism but rather they are simply ideas that emerged from the process of interviewing. Enough of the participants spoke about them that it became interesting to note and they are therefore being shared here. The following themes do not speak to enhancing or detracting from marriage or Orthodox Judaism, rather they are observations of ideas that were important for the participants to speak about as Orthodox Jewish individuals in a married relationship.

Minor Theme 1: Community's Role in the Orthodox Jewish Experience of Marriage Partners

This study's focus centered around the bidirectional nature of marriage along with the constructs of religion and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism. While the above themes detail this to be the case, the role of community also appears to play a big part in a married couple's life. This is true both on an individual level, as each person in the marriage interacts with the community on his or her own, and also as a couple. A number of the participants found that community was instrumental in helping them grow religiously and spiritually within Orthodox Judaism, which in turn influenced what type

of person they were looking for in a marriage partner. This theme appeared in five of the interviews, displaying its central role.

Levi is the type of person that is not satisfied with his status quo. He sees growth as a constant in his life and looks to different sources for that growth.

I do try to surround myself with people that inspire me. I do have several friends that really keep me going in that way. I'm able to feed off them. We learn together, farbreng [to sit and discuss], talk about holy spiritual things, in ways that we can improve ourselves. Just having those conversations that bring that awareness of self-improvement and spirituality within Judaism.

For some, the learning is what gives them growth, for others it's more about practice.

Chana shared,

Religion was commitment to the Jewish community. My mom volunteered for a million different Jewish organizations. My parents are big baalei tzedakah [charity donors]. My dad always worked so he couldn't give his time but my mom did. It was just a natural extension. We are committed to Jews. Let's make the actions match up with the internal. It was about consistency and sincerity.

Some of the participants grew up as practicing Orthodox Jews. Others came to it at a later point in life. While in high school and college, Ben began exploring Judaism and a few of his friends were there with him.

I had a good friend, when I got back from Israel that summer his brother had become very religious, left school, was involved with Aish [Jewish organization]. I came to see him when I came back and he was wearing a yarmulke [skullcap]

and tzitzis [traditional fringes worn by male Orthodox Jews]. It was helpful to have your best friend at the time also going down the same path as you. It made it much easier. I walked around high school senior year with my yarmulke on. I remember we once went to a coffee house that my band used to play at on Friday night. We came the next night and someone told me you know you really shouldn't walk around on Friday night with a yarmulke on. But again, I just didn't know.

Ben shared further about a Rabbi he met in college at one of the onsite synagogues whose style of prayer he connected to and chose to mimic.

The Rabbi there was so loud and crazy. Just sometimes when you sit and sing aloud and pound on the table you're doing a religious act but somehow it becomes more spiritual. You can say bentsching [blessing after meals] as sometimes pounding on the table, that energy, leads to more kavanah [intent, focus].

Therefore you have more spirituality.

Chana also found that certain key community members have helped her and her husband at critical moments. She shared,

After the fire this year, I was feeling very distant from [my husband] because he had such a polar opposite experience than I did. He didn't feel like it was a trauma. And I was like what the hell. We were such opposite extremes and it was really lonely for me. I felt very frustrated and it was very painful. For me what I did that helped me tremendously, we went to the Rav [Rabbi] that we respect the most when it comes to everyday life, everyday ruchniyus [spiritual]

kinds of questions. Not halachic [Jewish law] questions, but how should I approach this. I actually went to Rabbi [...] and I asked him, am I wrong, what do I do? He was so wonderful. He spoke to [my husband]. It was the first time in our life we went to a Rav [Rabbi]. It wasn't even for him to talk to [my husband] it was just for me to express my feelings. But I didn't want to talk to my therapist. I knew she would just validate me and I didn't want that. I wanted a religious perspective, should I be better should I be more supportive of [my husband] when I feel this way. At least I got the answer I wanted. But I didn't want to just get validation. I wanted an approach that fit into my religious hashkafos [outlook] of what my role is overall in life.

She also spoke about the time her husband quit his job and she was nervous about their situation:

The therapist was like your husband shouldn't do that to you and I came home and we got in a big fight. Later I really regretted that. Her approach while very supportive on the one hand was very destructive to us. I never wanted to be put in a situation like that again where someone from the outside was telling me all the flaws in our marriage and what to do...The next time I want advice from a therapist will be when I feel like they understand my value system about marriage.

She chose to approach a Rabbi and Rebbetzin [Rabbi's wife] in her community that both she and her husband respected.

I want someone who gets what we are working towards. That's why the next time I needed advice on my marriage I went to the Rabbi and Rebbetzin. I knew fundamentally I wouldn't respect the advice I got from my therapist. When they said [my husband] is wrong and we're going to talk to him, I said great. And then the argument was over.

Later she had insight into why it was particularly helpful in this situation. "The specific argument we were having was essentially a religious one." Having another couple who fully understood the religious and spiritual implications within Orthodox Judaism of their argument was essential to helping her feel the advice she was receiving was sound.

Speaking of the role of the religious community in their lives today, Ben shared, [My wife] likes when we sit outside and everybody comes by. She loves socializing. You wouldn't have that [without the community], and I'm so happy when everybody does. It makes me happy knowing that she has that on Shabbos, when people come by and she can kibbitz [talk] with them.

Rivka directly connected her community to her happiness in her marriage. "I guess when you're happy, you're happy with the community and the life, your life is filled and your marriage is good. It's all connected."

Not everyone felt that the community enhances their life or their marriage. Leah spoke negatively of her experiences in the community.

The loshon harah [slander] is rampant. The jealousy between people who have money and don't. And I don't hear people talking about Torah [five books of Moses]. But they say it's a good time and I hardly ever think it's a good time. I

don't get anything from the organized religion part of it. I think that's another category. There is religion and spirituality and then the organization of it. The group, the club. This is not the club I particularly enjoyed being in.

Minor Theme 2: Differing Roles and Foci of Partners in Orthodox Judaism

Men and women take on different, often complementary, roles in marriage.

Along this line, when Orthodox Judaism is inserted into a marriage, men and women become more focused on different aspects of these and even place differing levels of importance in different areas. Before being married the participants developed and grew at their own pace, the women not necessarily comparing themselves to the men, and vice versa. However, the participants, having been married for at least several years, were aware of a number of differing roles or foci they each had, distinct from their partners. This was another theme that surfaced in every interview.

While a single person's individual Orthodox Jewish religious level is largely determined by the family of origin and later in life by a person's choice of who they bring into their lives and what they take upon themselves, some felt that the Orthodox Jewish religious level of a couple seems to often be set by the wife. Naftali pointed this out,

The woman sets the religious level... if you have a wife that is very careful about stuff, you are forced into doing it. If your wife eats and then she benches [says a blessing] afterwards, but you don't feel like it, you are going to bench. The wife sets the level.

Ben also pointed out how his wife takes on some of the more practical family decisions.

She worries about the more practical stuff, shidduchim [marriage introductions]. I don't think about shidduchim. I know it's on her mind. When the time comes and all this stuff has to be done, I'll say, oh my God how come nobody told me. I'll know she'll have thought about it for however many years.

From an Orthodox Jewish point of view, the participants seemed to universally feel that men, out of desire or necessity, spend more time on spiritual pursuits. Naftali felt that women by their nature are already more spiritual and therefore do not have to spend as much time working on it. "She is a woman and that gives her an advantage on a spiritual level. Women are more spiritual than men by nature. She's much more spiritual than me, definitely." Even if that is true, the reality of the Orthodox Jewish society is that men are expected to spend more time at their spiritual pursuits. Rivka said

[My husband] probably pulls me more just because he has more opportunities to learn. That's life men just do. He goes out to the kollel [place of Jewish study] once a week. He just has much more opportunities to learn. So I think he's definitely always in the lead but it keeps me trying to.

Regarding herself,

I don't have that. I leave when my kids leave and I'm home when they're home. It's not like I can excuse myself and say hey and then go listen for half hour. It's just not going to work. I just don't have that that hour a day.

Similarly, Dinah sees her husband's role as leading the spiritual charge.

I think I'm in the proper role of being a follower to my husband. When he gets excited about something I'll do what I can to get excited about it, if it is in a

religious aspect or not. If it is, add the spirituality and excitement and feelings in it, and absolutely they come hand in hand affecting each other.

Leah appears to view her role in a somewhat similar fashion.

In a way, if I want to get spiritual, he is doing it for the two of us. I don't have to do it because he does it and we are one light. Let him do it. I could never do it. I don't have that draw to it.

Levi has a less role defining outlook.

By definition I think we experience [spirituality] differently. So my partner is inspired when I daven [pray] for the amud [as the cantor, leading the services] but for me, depending on where I'm at, that's not necessarily inspiring for me. Maybe she's inspired by me. But I need more than that.

Perhaps most of all, Chana spoke in detail about how her outlook on Orthodox Judaism has shifted from before she was married to the present.

I was a very big minyan [quorum for praying] goer before we got married just because I was able to and I was also a Jewish professional so I was supposed to be at minyan...But now I'm just relieved I don't have to go to minyan and relieved that I don't have to run around and make sure I hear all 100 kolot [ram's horn blasts] on Rosh Hashana [Jewish New Year]. It would just be crazy. I'm just grateful to Hashem [God] for that differentiation in the halacha [Jewish law]. I feel like God is differentiating.

Also,

[I am] feeling much more that the way the halacha is differentiated has so much to do with women being moms, and just not having the luxury to hear 100 kolos or take a lulav [palm frond] every day of Sukkos [Jewish Holiday]. I still make my best effort to do those things but I definitely feel like because of the overwhelming-ness of children, the halacha [Jewish law] is set up with tremendous rachamim [mercy]. That's how I view it now. Before I felt like I'm just left out, I would feel so much more connected if only... Now, I feel thank you Hashem [God], I couldn't do that if I needed to. I choose my children first. It's just human instinct to not leave a screaming baby to go run and hear shofar [ram's horn, sounded on Rosh Hashana]. I wouldn't be able to pull myself away. It's hard enough as it is... I'm not going to run to shul [synagogue] to be at minyan when I want my house organized which I feel is a function of my mothering duty, having a functional home that everyone is comfortable in, not chaotic, and children are dressed nicely, mechubad [honorably]. Those are my priorities now. Of course, I would daven [pray] on my own but I'm not going to go crazy to daven btzibur [pray with the congregation]... It's a function of my feeling like I have a role to play as part of my religious obligation in this world to be an ezer kenegdo [balanced partner] to [my husband], raise my children well, to mitzvos [commandments from God].

Summary

This chapter reported the results of this study. It was conducted from a phenomenological perspective and the participants were interviewed in a way to allow

the themes to emerge organically. The themes discovered speak to the bidirectional interaction of Orthodox Judaism and the marriage relationship. When these themes were shared with the participants, their responses aligned with the conclusions presented in this research. The first theme looks at how Orthodox Judaism enhances marriage while the second them looks at the reverse, how marriage enhances Orthodox Judaism. Along these lines the third theme clarifies how Orthodox Judaism detracts from the marriage relationship, while the fourth theme goes into detail how marriage detracts from Orthodox Judaism. Lastly, two important ideas that surfaced from the interviews were presented. The following chapter will discuss these findings and their implications. These results will be looked at in light of previous research. The implications and applicability of this research to other populations and counseling in general will be discussed.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand how spirituality and religiosity within Orthodox Judaism interact with marriage. The data gathered through interviews of eight married Orthodox Jewish participants and organized in the previous chapter will be discussed, conclusions will be drawn, and the results will be explored in detail. A full and detailed picture emerged once the data was collected, sorted, and organized into themes. This allowed this researcher to look back on the previously cited research to see how this new information fits with previous literature.

The following discussion will look in detail at the areas that connect well with previous findings as well as areas that contrast. The hypothesis formed at the outset of the research was that the spirituality and religiosity of Orthodox Judaism will affect the marriage relationship and likewise, the marriage relationship will affect an individual's and couple's experience of the religious and spiritual aspects of Orthodox Judaism.

Connection to the Literature

Until this point, the path of this study evolved in a fairly linear fashion. The study began by looking at previous research connected to this study by similarity of concept and then the stage was set by detailing the particular method this study would follow to gather data. Then, the results of the data gathering process were shared along with the results of the coding process and the conclusions drawn from it. Now, the discussion will cycle back to connect this data gathered and the conclusions drawn to the previous literature cited earlier in this paper. The importance of connecting the results of the study

to the previous literature speaks to the goal of advancing the collective understanding of the constructs of this study, the spirituality and religiosity of Orthodox Judaism and marriage, as well as the constructs of similar research.

Counseling and Spiritual/Religious Matters

At the outset, it was posited that because religion and spirituality plays a significant role in the lives of those who are so inclined, they might be more comfortable speaking about matters of counseling with someone that deeply understands the nuance and intricacy of their specific religious and spiritual practice (Stewart & Gale, 1994).

Chana, one of the participants in this study, stated this most clearly.

I want someone who gets what we are working towards. That's why the next time I needed advice on my marriage I went to the Rabbi and Rebbetzin. I knew fundamentally I wouldn't respect the advice I got from my therapist. When they said [my husband] is wrong and we're going to talk to him, I said great. And then the argument was over.

This is directly what Kayaser (1993) was speaking about when he noted that when experiencing difficulty, partners in a marriage will often not come at first to a counselor or other mental health professional, but rather to a member of the clergy. In fact, this participant spoke multiple times about instances in her life when the advice she got from different therapists felt too generic and out of sync with her worldview. She felt strongly that this stems from the fact that her life was so deeply tied into the spiritual and religious aspects of Orthodox Judaism. As Schnall (2006) found, a lack of understanding or confusion about a client's culture or specific multicultural constructs can impact the

counselor/client relationship in a negative fashion. Not only that, but as Langmann (1999) found, once the counselor obtains a detailed and subtle knowledge of these multicultural constructs, namely religion and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism, they serve to enhance the therapeutic relationship by allowing the counselor and client to deeply explore these areas in a more meaningful way.

When students are in the process of learning to become counselors it may be helpful for counselor educators to share this idea. Because the client often assumes a lack of awareness of cultural nuance and understanding on the part of the counselor, Orthodox Jewish clients may not look to a counselor as their first choice in therapy. When an Orthodox Jewish client does come in to a counselor for help with a problem, there is still a strong likelihood that there is at least some level of fear or suspicion that the counselor will not fully understand where the client is coming from or the particular challenges or values of Orthodox Judaism. Knowing this at the outset gives a counselor the option of addressing this with the client from the very start of the therapeutic relationship (Schnall, 2006). Were clients to feel that rather than this different worldview being a hindrance to therapy, the counselor can approach things from a state of curiosity and respect, it will allow the client to feel comfortable and accepted. Without this tension in the way, the work of counseling can take place, no longer impeded by the cultural differences of the client and counselor.

Attraction to Partner

One of the ideas that kept resurfacing from the participants' data was the significant role that the spirituality and religiosity of Orthodox Judaism played in

influencing an individual to be attracted to and select a particular marriage partner. In fact, this fits well with previous research done in this area which found that individuals will use spiritual beliefs to influence choice of romantic partner as well as their outlook within romantic relationships (Mahoney et al., 2001).

This in fact turned out to be the first sub-theme of theme number one, which looked at how religion and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism enhances marriage. To add to the previous understanding that spiritual beliefs will influence one's choice of a partner, this research delves more deeply into why that is so. For example, Levi found that he was looking not only for somebody that had a similar religious background, but also shared particular values, or at least someone who would understand his desire for those values. As well, he spoke about being attracted to his wife's inspiration, being inspired by that inspiration, if you will. So, one might distinguish these two foci into two particular areas. Firstly, sharing the religious and spiritual background of Orthodox Judaism allows partners to share a particular value system. Secondly, it lends the foundation for areas of attraction towards one's partner or inspiration from one's partner. One might speak of this as containing both foundational aspects of choice of marriage partner, where the partners share common features, as well as the complementary aspects of two people joining together, where the partners do not share features but are inspired or attracted to those features in the other partner.

This theme was echoed by other participants as well. For example, Avi spent a good many years dating in the hopes of finding a suitable marriage partner with whom to raise a family. But it was not until he began focusing more seriously on the religious and

spiritual aspects of Orthodox Judaism that he was able to more clearly delineate to himself what he was looking for. Like Levi mentioned above, he was looking for someone that shared a particular religious and spiritual Orthodox Jewish background, but also someone who he felt strongly embodied the idea of living spiritually. This is what he found most attractive, though it was not so strong in his own life.

In fact almost every participant spoke about being attracted to some religious or spiritual aspect of Orthodox Judaism where they felt themselves to be somewhat lacking. Naftali was highly attracted to the nuanced spirituality of his wife. Likewise, Chana found herself being most attracted to her husband's commitment to religion as well as his sincerity of action within Orthodox Judaism. While all of the above participants spoke about sharing and upholding these values themselves, they looked at their partners as the ones that more strongly expressed these values, and the reason why they felt they were so strongly attracted to this particular person.

Multicultural awareness is helpful for counselors and counselor educators because it allows one to gain awareness, at least on some level, of the client's world. Even when a client from a non-dominant culture has much in common with others, it would do a disservice for a counselor to assume that there is nothing more affecting that client. These subtle understandings gained from learning about what a client finds most attractive or endearing about her husband can contribute strongly to success in counseling. It allows a counselor to guide the client to discover some of these deeper truths, possibly not previously considered. The openness towards discovery that the

counselor displays with a client can serve to model for the client the value of discovery in her own life.

Defining Spirituality and the Formation of Values

There have been many attempts to define spirituality in previous literature. Ingersoll (1994) developed his spiritual wellness inventory which led him to find the seven factors or dimensions of spirituality. These dimensions include meaning, conception of divinity, relationship, mystery, experience, play, and an integrative dimension. His third dimension, relationship, speaks of how one might relate to a particular belief of what is divine and how that relates to others. In this research, this idea, too, arose from the interviews with the participants. In particular, a number of the participants spoke of how their entire relationship is built around their Orthodox Jewish life.

One of the sub themes to evolve from the data, as part of the theme that looked at how the religion and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism enhances marriage, was how the religion and spirituality of Orthodox Judaism acts as a foundation or structure for marriage. For example, Chana spoke about how Orthodox Judaism is "so embedded into our whole fabric of living." She felt that it was tied in so deeply that in fact it was often difficult to distinguish between her marriage and her Orthodox Judaism. As she said, it's "about the structure of our lives, everyday structure like it would be a soul without a body almost." This seems very similar to what Burns (1989) brought to light when he spoke of "searching for connectedness between the self, others, and a higher power."

Knowing what serves as a foundation for a client is fundamental for a counselor in the therapeutic relationship. Partly it is to allow the counselor to understand deeply the choices a client makes in his life but also, it serves to create an environment where a client can voice ideas that perhaps were never said out loud. This can serve to clarify for a client what forces are at play in his own mind and from where a resolution might stem.

Also relating to the sense of structure or foundation that spirituality and religiosity within Orthodox Judaism provides for marriage, is the fifth dimension that Ingersoll (1994) speaks of, experience. As is found generally, spirituality often relates to an increased experience of being alive and in fact is found at the core of many key human experiences (Moberg, 1971). This research found that for a few of these participants their values were informed strongly by their particular spiritual experiences. As Maslow (1970) found, it is often spiritual elements within one's peak experiences that most strongly influence one's creation of values and the driving force behind one's search for meaning.

Avi stated clearly that once he reached a certain point in his life, after the growth in spiritual and religious aspects of his life, he wanted a spouse that wanted the same things as him. As he shared, for both he and his wife, "it's not just that we wanted to be with a good person, we wanted to be with someone who wanted to be religious and lead a religious life."

In teaching multicultural awareness to students, a counselor educator may share that the choice of partner for an Orthodox Jew is about many things. While it is hard to rate what factors are more important than others, it appears to be fundamental that

partners share a similar level of religiosity within Orthodox Judaism. Additionally, partners are looking for someone with a similar desire or feeling to maintain their level of Orthodox Judaism. This awareness may help counselors working with a couple in marital counseling navigate their shared history and choice of partner.

Formation and Maintenance of Spirituality and Religion

The literature has found that the transmission of a set of beliefs or values and practices surrounding both spirituality and religion usually begins with the process of parents transmitting these to their children. This begins with the parent or caregiver's level of Jewish identification. Bock (1976) found that this correlates strongly to the Jewish identification of one's children. One of the primary ways that parents transmit particular religious belief and practice to their children is through the process of modeling (Fowler & Andrews, 1981). This was a prominent theme throughout the interviews conducted for this research. As the second theme from this research stated, that marriage does in fact enhance religious and spiritual practice within Orthodox Judaism, a part of this looked at how parents' focus on children served to enhance their own experience of religion and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism.

Once the marriage was established and children came into the picture it appeared to become increasingly important to the parents to share with their children not only the particular practices they do surrounding religious ritual, but also the emotion and excitement connected to those practices. Avi pointed out how different he feels now when he looks back at the excitement he felt as a child regarding Jewish holidays and Shabbos. But what drives him now is that he wants his children to feel the excitement he

remembers feeling when the Jewish holidays came about. This fits in well with Himmelfarb's (1980) thought that a strong or weak level of practice in any of the dimensions of being a Jew is likely to affect the upbringing of the children in one's family. Dinah expressed this idea as well that one of her primary goals with her children is to pass on the excitement for religious practice. Because her goal was to raise her children to be religious she wants to show them an example of that through modeling. As she said,

I think that when the children see their parents excited over religious things it keeps them religious all their life. I don't want to force my children into a box. I want to show my children that we feel passionately, that we feel excited about this.

This is right in line with what Flor and Knapp (2001) posited, namely, that when parents have a desire for their children to be religious and they also have open conversations regarding spirituality and religion in the home, it fosters a sense of importance surrounding spirituality and religion.

Commonly, parents may struggle with communicating effectively with their children (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2009). When a counselor is working with a family, it helps to know what motives lay behind parents' verbal interactions with their children. Realizing that it is important to Orthodox Jewish parents to share their religious values and practices with their children, as well as the emotional excitement around these beliefs and practices, a counselor can work with the clients to realize this goal. Knowing to

check on how the parents feel about this and how the children in the family take to it can open up a rich and key area for exploration and resolution.

Himmelfarb (1980) also found that one's particular religious and spiritual practice does not always follow what one's parent's modeled. In fact, many choose to increase or decrease their level of practice, belief, or participation from what was observed in their family of origin. A number of the participants in this study spoke about this as well. Rivka, for example, shared some of her initial difficulty in taking on aspects of religious practice and in fact knows that her parents still look at some of the practices she keeps as odd or unnecessary. But she, together with her husband, chose consciously to change her level of practice and belief. This was important for her as an individual but also because she wanted to pass this along to her children. Perhaps a counselor educator can help future counselors be aware that when working with Orthodox Jewish clients whose level of religiosity is significantly different from their parents, there is potential for conflict with the family of origin.

In addition to parents' focus on children serving to enhance their level of religion and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism, it was also found that marriage often serves to help maintain and grow the individual's level of Orthodox Judaism. Many of the participants in this study spoke about maintaining their level of spirituality and religiosity within Orthodox Judaism because they felt their partner would want them to or because they felt inspired by their partner. This, too, is supported by other studies that found that marital satisfaction preceded increased religious involvement (Booth, Johnson, & Branaman, 1995). Here, too, counselors and counselor educators can be aware and

possibly explore the feelings that accompany the shared spirituality and religiosity resulting from influence of one's partner. While partners often increase their Orthodox Judaism to better match their partners, this also leaves room for feelings of pressure or resentment. These feelings cannot be predicted but the awareness of this common structure in marriages within Orthodox Judaism allows a counselor to see potential sources of conflict or challenge within a couple's relationship.

The Role of Community

Studies have found that religion is very much a community-based practice (Sarason, 1993). There are a number of benefits that go along with being a member of a community, regardless of what the community is founded upon. Simply having a sense of belonging within the community allows one to feel comfort especially during difficult times. As Helminiak (2001) points out, a religious community often plays a significant role in times of transition such as birth, death, and marriage.

A number of the participants spoke about similar ideas regarding community and the role it plays in their religious and spiritual lives, as well as their lives in general. Levi spoke about the role he feels the community plays in helping him maintain a desire to grow religiously and spiritually within Orthodox Judaism. He shared that learning religious doctrine with friends, discussing spiritual matters with them, and having deep conversations keeps him thinking about such things. Others, Ben for example, spoke of the social aspects gained from being a part of the community. Because Orthodox Jews often live close to each other in neighborhoods, he and his wife often sit outside on Shabbos [Sabbath] and socialize with the people walking by. This is similar to what

Wells (1995) found that religion in the context of community provides structure or foundation on which one can rely.

In a sense, one's partner may also be viewed as the most intimate member of one's community. With this in mind, one might look at all of the enhancement and detracting that a marriage effects upon an individual's spirituality and religiosity within Orthodox Judaism and apply this on some level to the community. A counselor may help a married couple delve into the role community has played in their marriage to better assess what aspects of community to increase because they provide enhancement to the marriage and what parts to lessen.

One of the points made earlier was that a person is more likely to participate and be interested in activities when they are in an environment where those activities are valued and acted upon. In other words it is really an issue of proximity that strongly influences what a person does and values. This was said in the context of how one partner in a marriage might have a certain passion for something and that passion often transfers to the other partner. One of the participants to speak about this was Rivka, who shared that while she does not often have as much time to study religious subjects for inspiration as her husband, nevertheless she feels that because he makes a point of making time for it and encouraging her to do so, she is more likely to take the time one or two evenings a week to listen to someone inspirational. Similarly, Dinah spoke about how her husband often has projects within the Orthodox Jewish community that he is passionate about. One example of this is his interest in community prayer. She shared that on her own this is something she is very unlikely to do. Because she sees how

passionate he is about it, she chooses to participate and finds herself becoming inspired along with him.

This idea easily transfers to a similar role that community might play. For example with in the Orthodox Jewish community, much of the religious learning that takes place is done in a community setting (Schnoor, 2002). People often gather in a synagogue or community center to hear someone speak. It is also common for two or more people to gather at set times each week to learn about some subject in a group setting. The point of all this is that while one might be inspired every once in a while to pull out a religious text and open it up to search for some deeper understanding and growth, the regularity of a class or group study session is more likely to make that continued learning and growth a habitual and steady pursuit. This is similar to learning in an academic setting. The academic setting can also be thought of as a community with the same benefits of learning. While a person can always pull out a book and read on one's own, the regularity of a class makes it more likely to happen.

For counselor education it is helpful to know that for Orthodox Jewish couples community gathering is frequent. For many it is a daily occurrence, beginning with prayer in the morning in a synagogue and often ending the day the same way. Rather than community participation being a more infrequent occurrence, weekly for example, many Orthodox Jews view community interaction as a daily expectation. This may help counselors understand how integrated the community is in the context of daily life.

Growth, learning, and inspiration do not happen in a vacuum. When it happens in the context of a community, where one has friends and there is social interaction, it

creates an enjoyable context for the learning or inspiration. Again, this is similar to an educational setting where teachers and students form a community. When people gather together for a purpose, there is at least some level of social and emotional connection, likely making the process more meaningful and enjoyable (Sarason, 1993).

The concept of community is really about the social and emotional connections an individual forms within that community. When those bonds are strong a person is more likely to participate in activities within the community (Emmons & Paloutzian, 2003). After all, most every one yearns for deep connection with others. As a number of the participants in the study pointed out, when one connects with others around matters deeply valued by both parties, the connection formed is also deeply valued and felt.

For the counselor and counselor educator, it is helpful to know the depth of role community plays in the lives of Orthodox Jews. While this role will certainly not be the same for each person, generally speaking the involvement with the community is at least weekly and likely more often than that. Also, this speaks to the challenge an individual or couple might face when conflict revolves around difference of opinion regarding some aspect of community (Brutz & Ingoldsby, 1984). These conflicts can be quite significant for clients because of the particular role of community in Orthodox Judaism.

While none of the participants in this study touched on this area, one might extrapolate from the fourth theme mentioned above regarding marriage, that there are aspects of community that might detract from an individual's religious and spiritual experience of Orthodox Judaism. For example, it was found that one's commitment to marriage requires time which might otherwise be spent in an individual's religious or

spiritual pursuit. Also, if the partners feel they are at different places religiously or spiritually there is an increased chance of conflict. A number of the participants spoke about the importance of trying to stay in a similar place to their partner. This is relevant to an individual's experience of community as well. It is easy to feel inspired when in sync with others from one's community but when one's experience is that the community is too different from one's concept of Orthodox Judaism, the likelihood of feeling distant or disenchanted from the community is increased (Bonelli et al., 2012).

This speaks to the relevancy of counselors being familiar with the role that community plays in an individual and couple's life. Particularly for the Orthodox Jewish population, community plays a significant role not only in a couple's experience of Orthodox Judaism but also in their experience of marriage. This is so because a great number of the interactions and experiences a couple will have will take place in the context of community, informally with other couples, and more formally at community events (Dew & Wilcox, 2011).

Idiosyncratic Nature of Religion and Spirituality

While it is convenient to group people that share a broad range of religious practices and spiritual beliefs under the umbrella term Orthodox Judaism, it was apparent from the interviews conducted for this research that there is a great deal of nuance. Indeed, each Jew can be said to have his or her particular culture within Judaism (Herman, 1989). Similarly, each Jew brings his or her own family history, personality, and personal values and this combination creates each person's unique culture as a Jew (Goldstein & Goldscheider, 1968).

This point became particularly relevant after hearing the participants speak about their own journey growing up in the context of Judaism. A few of the participants did not grow up as Orthodox Jews and only came to it at some point later in life. Even among those who did grow up in Orthodox Jewish families, some participants spoke about moving away from Orthodox Judaism for a period of time, only coming back to it later. Given that there was so much variability in even this small sample of the Orthodox Jewish population, there is no doubt that even more variability is to be found in the greater community. This emphasizes the point even further that though it is convenient to group members under the term Orthodox Judaism, it also does a disservice because it does not allow for the richness of experience each individual brings.

While this idea serves to complicate matters somewhat, because this study assumed that it made sense to group these participants in the category of Orthodox Jews, it also opens up the possibility that the ideas explored here have much in common with those that do not fall within this category. Were two individuals to meet that shared a strong interest in community prayer, for example, this could easily form the basis for a strong connection between them. This would then expand their sense of community and make the concepts gathered here relevant to those individuals.

At the outset this study wanted to know if aspects of culture within Orthodox Judaism interact with marriage. Through the discovery of how each participant's experience of what is important, valued, and inspiring is really quite unique, this researcher strongly considers the possibility that what is most important to consider in this research is the particular value an individual places on any aspect of life (Halford &

Markman, 1997). What has made Orthodox Judaism such a rich area to study within the context of marriage is that it represents an area of life where the participants collectively connect to it deeply. It seems likely that it is not a particular practice or belief that contributes so strongly to the interaction with marriage. Rather, it has more to do with the interaction of marriage with deeply felt and valued cultural aspects of life.

This idea holds particular relevance for a counselor. Despite it being likely that a counselor will not be of the same faith as an Orthodox Jewish couple, one can nevertheless readily focus on the cultural areas most relevant to working with that couple. In fact, was one to assume that the cultural aspects affecting the clients are of a certain nature because they are Orthodox Jews, one is likely to be wrong in at least in some areas (Goldstein & Goldscheider, 1968). A safer and more sensitive approach is to listen to what is most relevant and valued by the particular clients with whom one is working. This also serves to take the mystery out of a little-known culture. From the data gathered here one can draw the conclusion that clients will have to tell you what is most relevant to them, how they are inspired, what drives them to get up in the morning and make the decisions they do.

For the counselor educator, the challenge may be in teaching counselors about finding the balance between being educated about the particular culture or value system of a particular client and viewing a client as unique and unhindered by the descriptions or expectations usually ascribed to that culture. Of course, there are benefits to each of these viewpoints and both are likely to be utilized in counseling at the same time. Perhaps what is most beneficial is to teach the counselor about the value of listening for

the emotion surrounding the client's values, choices, and challenges (Helminiak, 2001). From the data gathered in this study it is clear that what is most relevant is not the details of what a particular couple values deeply or fights about, but rather the fact that they do value something deeply and this therefore plays a significant part in their relationship and how this deep value interacts with that relationship.

Effect of Religion on Marriage

The primary goal of this research was to discover the link between religiosity and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism and marriage. As mentioned previously, there are in fact a number of connections between these constructs with them affecting each other in both a positive fashion as well as negatively. There has been some general research in the area of religion and marriage. For example, those couples that report a religious affiliation were less likely to have a divorce than those without (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2008). Speaking more to the degree of religious affiliation Breault and Kposowa (1987) found that the degree of religious participation as measured by frequency of religious center attendance was positively correlated with a lower divorce rate. Still, these studies leave a lot of room to increase our understanding of why this is the case. For example, some have suggested that it is not the increased religious participation that lowers the divorce rate but rather the emphasis of religion on discouraging divorce (Chan & Heaton, 1999).

While the conclusions drawn from this research cannot be said to directly speak to how religion and spirituality outside of Orthodox Judaism will affect marriage, nevertheless, from the results found here perhaps ideas will emerge that may in fact be

found to be true for other religions or cultural groups. The third sub theme of theme one is that Orthodox Judaism leads to growth and deepening of one's marriage. So for this population, at minimum, this does speak to the likelihood of increased religiosity and spirituality leading to a better marriage and therefore a lower divorce rate.

One example of this comes from a few of the participants in the study who spoke about the mikvah [ritual bath] process. For example, Ben shared that when his wife returns from the mikvah they recognize that they can be together again physically, something they were holding themselves back from for two weeks. He was aware that this enhances the experience for both him and his wife. Chana took this one step further noting that through the observation of the mikvah ritual a couple brings God into even this aspect of their lives. Perhaps this allows sex and other types of physical closeness to take on increased meaning and importance.

Another example is the role that Shabbos [Sabbath] plays in the home life of a couple or family. A number of the participants spoke about how it simply creates time for a couple to sit together, speak to one another, and be a part of each other's lives. This, again, is supported by research such as that done by Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, and Swank (2008) who found that a greater degree of religiousness leads to significantly higher marital satisfaction. The strength of this current study is that it goes into detail as to why this is the case, at least for the Orthodox Jewish population. Furthermore, the research of Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, and Swank (2008) looks at the religious level as being something steady, not accounting for change across time. This research adds to that understanding by noting that it is not only the religious level shared by a

couple that enhances the marriage but perhaps more importantly the growth of that religious level together by a couple that serves to enhance the relationship. As Dinah found, religious growth within Orthodox Judaism together as a couple, especially early in their marriage, was particularly beneficial in helping the couple feel connected. She noted how certain religious practice brought joy to her husband and this gave her motivation to join him in this, allowing them to connect further.

This understanding, that the growth a couple experiences together is a significant factor in increasing their connection as a couple, can serve as an insight counselor educators may teach about this particular culture. It is possible that this insight translates to other cultures as well and therefore may be helpful to share from a multicultural perspective in general. Knowing that shared religious growth is one of the areas an Orthodox Jewish couple can consider when looking to grow or enhance their relationship, counselors can suggest this to clients and help them explore how they might go about adding to their religious growth, thereby enhancing their marriage.

Religious Practice Detracting from Marriage

Though this study found a number of ways that marriage and Orthodox Judaism are enhanced by each other, it also found data supporting the idea that the spiritual and religious experience of Orthodox Judaism can detract from marriage. One particular way this happens is when Orthodox Judaism is experienced at a different level than one's partner. Previous research supports this idea. Ellison et al. (1999) found that a lack of shared level of religious commitment or belief was linked to a greater degree of domestic violence. Particularly, they found that when men were significantly more conservative in

their religious views than their wives, they were 2.5 times more likely to have incidents of domestic violence than couples who shared their level of religious outlook. While none of the participants in this study spoke of domestic violence, a few did speak of the idea of needing to be on the same page religiously and spiritually as their partner. Furthermore, they noted that not being on the same page was likely to lead to a significant degree of conflict or unhappiness.

Dinah spoke to the emotional part of the relationship and how it might be affected if a couple does not share the same level of religious interest. She noted that "if what is interesting to him is not interesting to you, and you do your thing and you do your thing, then one day you'll wake up and be like what are we doing together." On a more practical level Levi observed that it is particularly challenging to be religious if your partner is not. He felt that it would create a lot of tension within a marriage, especially if there are children and the couple is not practicing religion the same way. Again, while this does not speak to tension leading to domestic violence, if one looks at domestic violence as a result of a great deal of stress in a marriage, then the findings of this study do relate to that research.

Of particular note to counselors is the idea that tension is likely to arise when partners feel out of sync with each other religiously or spiritually (Goodman & Dollahite, 2004). Because Orthodox Judaism is most often experienced in the context of family and community, it is especially challenging when these parts of one's life do not fit well together. It can be an isolating experience for both partners to feel alone in their religious or spiritual path. Questions that probe these areas in a counseling environment are likely

to deeply touch a couple affected this way in their marriage. Knowing possible and likely areas of tension allows a counselor to move more quickly in uncovering the relevant areas affecting a couple's happiness.

For the participants in this study, and likely for many Orthodox Jews, keeping the religious laws and spirit of Orthodox Judaism is a goal and deeply held interest. Because it takes so much time, energy, money, and commitment, no person would do so without greatly valuing its underlying purpose. That being said, a number of participants spoke of how it can leave one feeling worn out, without energy for other valued areas of life. Some also spoke of having less money because of the increased cost of the Orthodox Jewish lifestyle. Counselors and counselor educators may benefit from having insight into this struggle that is likely present, on some level, for any Orthodox Jew. From the interviews in this study it was clear that couples often struggle with a belief or value on the one hand about what is ideal from a religious perspective and on the other hand what is best for a couple or family. For example, Chana spoke of feeling stressed and fighting with her husband about how much charity to give. Counselors can know that this is not merely a difference of opinion but more likely a struggle for each individual as well, where each person values both charity and spending money on one's family. Both partners likely have both of these values and just as they are struggling with each other in this area, they are also struggling internally with these conflicting values. Helping clients sort out their feelings on both an individual level as well as a couple may be helpful in moving them forward (Fiese & Tomcho, 2001).

A number of studies have looked at how a particular religion's view on sex and sexuality impacts a couple's experience of sex and physical closeness. Most of the participants in this study did not mention Orthodox Judaism having a negative impact on their sex life. This is similar to what other research has found regarding the impact of religion on sexual frequency and satisfaction (McFarland, Uecker, & Regnerus, 2011). However, two of the participants did mention that although in general they did not find it to be a detraction from their experience of closeness, there were particular life events where they felt it did cause distress. Ben shared that when his wife was giving birth to their first child it felt wrong for him to not hold his wife. Because these religious laws are so different from American culture and even other religious cultures, counselors and counselor educators that are aware of this particular challenge can know that it may impact their client's ability to connect to their partner. Also, the client may be struggling internally with the conflicting values of religious law and marital closeness.

Proximal Approaches to Studying Religion and Marriage

In the literature relating to proximal approaches in studying religion and marriage, several of the findings were supported by the data gathered from this study. One example may be drawn from something called the "sanctification of marriage" or the idea that key structures or parts of life possess a spiritual nature or significance (Mahoney et al. 2003). These researchers list two indices to measure the sanctification of marriage. The first index speaks of how a couple may view their marriage as having sacred qualities and is seen in how a couple uses terms to describe their marriage such as holy, religious, or spiritual. In fact, this very idea emerged in a few of the interviews conducted for this

study. Several of the participants described their marriages as being a gift from God or being bashert [Divinely predestined].

That being said, it is interesting to note that it is likely to have come up in the interviews only because the subjects under discussion were spirituality and religiosity of Orthodox Judaism, as well as marriage. This is likely to have prompted the participants to think along the lines of connecting these two, as this was the purpose of the study. Nevertheless, there was no specific question asking the participants to describe their marriage in these terms and when it did come up the participants spoke with genuine feeling.

The results were similar for the second index mentioned in the literature by Mahoney et al. (2003) where they described how the partners within a marriage view their marriage itself as an expression of Godliness within the world. Similarly, a few of the participants in this research mentioned this idea as well. In the sub-theme where Orthodox Judaism is looked at as a foundation to marriage, Avi put it beautifully when he said "the fact that two people can find each other and be happy and married, to me is a spiritual event." In a similar vein, Chana spoke about how her connection to God has been strongly influenced by her marriage. As she put it,

Whenever I talk, so many of my stories about feeling God in my life go back to [my husband] and feeling that he is my bashert [predestined partner]. For me that is such a clear point with God, where he played such an apparent role in my life. This insight, that Orthodox Jewish couples, and couples of other religions, may view their marriages as stemming from a divine source, is useful information from a multicultural

perspective. It allows counselors to understand the weight or importance a couple might place on their decision to marry and stay married. Where another couple might feel at a certain point that the marriage is no longer viable, a religious couple may take longer to reach that point because of their view of the divinely inspired nature of their marriage.

Along the same lines, Mahoney et al. (1999) also spoke of another proximal construct that they called "joint religious activities." These would refer to how often a couple engages in religious activities together and might include such things as a couple praying together, attending religious services together, speaking about God and the role of God in their marriage, and other spiritual issues. Not surprisingly, this construct was strongly present in every one of the interviews for this study. A few examples would include one from Ben where he spoke about urging his wife to attend religious services because of his awareness of the positive effect it has on their relationship. As he put it,

It's still just important to me to align as best we can. Even this morning I urged my wife, you should come to shul [synagogue] and daven [pray]. She hasn't been there in a while so I encourage her to. I want to make sure we're aligned. That's important.

Another example, this time from Dinah,

I don't think I'm the type of person who says okay, I'm going to take something upon myself. But if my husband is excited about it and I'm doing it to enhance my marriage, I might just end up taking it upon myself.

One of the encouraging pieces of literature relevant to this study was that done by Larson and Goltz (1989) who found that a higher commitment to marriage is correlated

with increased level of religious participation. Now it is true that this is merely a correlation and therefore does not speak to causality. However, at the same time this study was meant to look at the bidirectional nature of these constructs and therefore does not only speak of causality in a singular direction. Perhaps this will be one of the studies that go beyond the previous literature to explore not only the correlation of religious and marital factors but also the particular relationship and causality.

Similarly, perhaps more specifically, in a review of literature Bahr and Chadwick (1985) found that religious activity and affiliation have a positive effect on marriage. Further supporting this idea, Curtis & Ellison (2002) noted that affiliation alone is not sufficient to positively impact a marriage. Rather, there must be shared religious participation to see positive results in a marriage. This, too, is seen multiple times from the data gathered from the interviews for this study. For example, Rivka shared that her husband often encourages her to take more opportunities to learn subjects of a spiritual nature in keeping with what her husband does. As she said, "he probably pulls me more just because he has more opportunities to learn... So I think he's definitely always in the lead. But it keeps me trying to." A second example, Dinah spoke about sharing in the excitement her husband displays towards something religious or spiritual because of the effect she feels it has on enhancing her marriage.

I don't think I'm the type of person who says okay, I'm going to take something upon myself. But if my husband is excited about it and I'm doing it to enhance my marriage, I might just end up taking it upon myself.

One of the participants expressed a different view from that shared by a number of the participants for this study as well as the conclusions drawn by Curtis & Ellison (2002). Leah felt that she did not have a need to pursue spirituality in Orthodox Judaism in the same way her husband did. In fact, she looked at it as more of a complementary relationship, where he was serving her spiritual needs through his investment and it could be done without her. As she said,

In a way, if I want to get spiritual, he is doing it for the two of us. I don't have to do it because he does it and we are one light. Let him do it. I could never do it. I don't have that draw to it.

From these observations it may be helpful for counselor educators to take the views expressed by the participants in this study to understand that with Orthodox Jewish couples there is usually some element of self and partner assessment of religious level happening at all times. The participants in this study expressed in a positive sense, that it keeps them moving, inspired, and seeking to grow together. However, counselors and counselor educators should be aware that there is also the risk of distance being created as a result of the comparison process. Were one partner to feel that he no longer wants to meet his partner's level of religious commitment or excitement, there is potential for conflict because of the intertwining of Orthodox Judaism with marriage.

Religion, Sexuality, and Marriage

In this study opinions surfaced a few times regarding the role that Orthodox Judaism plays on the sexuality within marriage. This was seen from both a positive and negative point of view in that there were aspects of Orthodox Judaism that a few of the

participants found that enhance the sexuality within their marriages as well as aspects of Orthodox Judaism that detracted from the physical and emotional connection for a couple. Runkel (1998) posits that within some religions the strict outlook on sex and sexuality can create an underlying feeling of anxiety and guilt, thereby inhibiting sexual function within a marriage.

While none of the participants spoke about Orthodox Judaism creating a sense of anxiety or guilt regarding sex or sexuality, several did talk about the role of the mikvah [ritual bath] and the religious laws that go along with separating a husband and wife for about two weeks out of every month. The participants that did speak about this did so positively noting how the separation had the effect of enhancing the times when a couple could be together. Similarly, one of the participants also spoke about how the laws of ritual purity allowed her to recognize the place of God even within her sex life. This fits in well with what Murray-Swank, Pargament, and Mahoney (2002) found, that the relationship between sexuality and spiritual or religious background has shifted in recent decades, no longer only having a negative effect. Nelson (1987) spoke of the goal to “reunite sexuality with the experience of the sacred,” something seen in some of the data for this study.

On the other hand, some of the participants spoke of the challenges created by these laws, especially surrounding the time of childbirth. Because this was such an emotional time for both him and his wife, Ben found it particularly hard to not hold his wife while she was giving birth. He felt that this detracted from his connection with her. It is worth noting, however, that though a few participants noted the challenges faced by

these religious laws, none in the interviews spoke of anxiety or guilt surrounding sex or sexuality. It is possible that the subject was not targeted by this interview and further research would uncover other feelings in this area.

One of the challenges Orthodox Jews face in coming to a counselor that does not share their faith is having to explain religious laws such as mikvah. It is a very private and personal practice to begin with and perhaps more uncomfortable when having to be explained to someone not familiar with the ritual. Were counselors made aware of these details as part of their multicultural training, this hurdle would no longer be present. Likewise, counselors who are aware of these details can put their Orthodox Jewish clients at ease from the outset, letting them know that though they are not of the same faith, they are aware of many of the practices involved in Orthodox Judaism. Knowing the counselor has made effort to learn of the client's faith will likely create an appreciation and respect that the counselor can use to establish and build the therapeutic relationship.

Marital Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

Research done by Amato (2009) defines three types of marriages. The first, institutionalized marriage, speaks to the well-defined role each partner plays within the marriage. A partner is meant to fulfill certain obligations, thereby allowing the family to function and appear successful within society. This type of marriage deemphasizes the feelings between the partners. The second type of marriage highlighted by Wilcox & Nock (2006) is the companionate marriage. Here, the emphasis is on friendship, respect, and the feeling of love that grows as a relationship develops.

Although not ascertained directly through questions specifically meant to pinpoint exactly the type of marriage the participants felt they were a member of, from the responses it would appear that most of the participants would fall into the second type of marriage, companionate marriage. Examples to support this come from participants like Chana who spoke at length about her connection to her husband within the context of Orthodox Jewish religious observance. As she said, in speaking about Shabbos [Sabbath],

So much of our Shabbos observance connects me to [my husband]. Without that day I wouldn't feel as... like I said, I feel one of our biggest stresses is time and I think that just creates time. For us to sit and be together, that for sure is huge in our lives, in the way that we take time out for each other.

Another example, this time from Ben, where he talks about wanting to connect to his wife:

We want to be connected to each other. We want to be the same. There's always one horse slightly ahead of the other. You want to make sure if you start to get too far apart you lose each other. You don't want to do that.

These examples tell the story of individuals who put high importance on connecting to their partner and allowing the relationship itself to be a focus and goal.

In this case, there is a strong likelihood that the participants featured in the study were self-selecting, in that they were less likely to be of the first type of marriage mentioned before, the institutionalized marriage. The reason for this is because the participants knew that they were likely to talk about the religion and spirituality of

Orthodox Judaism along with their marriages, and therefore were only likely to participate in this process if there was a good degree of marital satisfaction. It would be rather uncomfortable, it is thought, for the participants to speak of their marriages if they are rife with contention or dissatisfaction. While this question was not directly asked, this researcher did not find this to be the case with the individuals interviewed for this study. This presents a shortcoming of the study and presents further room for research to satisfy in more detail the question of how would the data and results gathered from this study differ if looked at from the point of view of those who felt themselves to be in a more institutionalized marriage.

That is not to say that there were no aspects of an institutionalized marriage for any of the participants. Likely, these categories of marriage are more of a continuum than a hard and fast grouping. There was one hint of this from Leah during her interview where she spoke about how she felt the religious ritual of Orthodox Judaism kept her and her husband together. She stated bluntly that if either of them were to decide one day to no longer continue practicing Orthodox Judaism, it is likely that their marriage would end.

The third type of marriage written about in the literature is called the individualized marriage. While similar to a companionate marriage, it focuses the attention on the satisfaction of the individual rather than the couple as a whole (Ting, 2014). Also, commitment of the individuals in the marriage to each other is not necessarily meant to be long-term, but only so long as the needs of each individual are being met within the marriage. There were few hints, if any, from the interviews for this

study that any of the individuals look at their marriages in this way. If anything, what was mentioned before regarding Leah and how her marriage was likely to end if she or her husband chose to no longer be members of Orthodox Judaism may also support the view that her marriage is of this sort. Again, because the question of category of marriage was not explored in any detail through the interviews done for this study, it would be difficult to draw any strong conclusions. Indeed, it would be interesting to explore how the individuals felt about these three categories and where they fit in. Further study in this area would likely lead to interesting results.

For counselors doing marital counseling with an Orthodox Jewish couple, it is likely to be helpful to have a few possible structures to consider when classifying the particular type of marriage of a couple. Knowing the particular style of marriage helps a counselor know what the expectations are of each partner in regards to the marriage as well as how much work the couple is likely to do if the marriage shows signs of stress. As mentioned previously, Ben's views likely put him in the category of a companionate marriage. This then speaks to the feelings of connection with his wife that he values greatly and the emphasis he puts on growing the relationship. The approach a counselor would take would be quite different if Ben were part of an institutionalized marriage. Instead of focusing on the relationship with his partner as a goal in itself, the counselor might steer the client to explore the functionality of the family or its role in society (Amato, 2009).

A number of studies look at marital dissatisfaction and contributing factors. As Dew and Wilcox (2011) point out, it is the change in feelings of unfairness that is more

likely to contribute to marital dissatisfaction than changes of behavior or roles within the family. Similarly, Wilcox & Nock (2006) found that the significant factor in contributing to dissatisfaction was perceived inequality or unfairness of roles.

This was seen, on some level, from a few of the interviews for this study. In particular, Chana related that one of the points of contention between her and her husband is the amount of time he spends out of the home doing things of a religious nature, such as studying sacred texts. It was one of the examples she brought up of how Orthodox Judaism might contribute to marital dissatisfaction. She made it clear that she felt her role was to be a mother to her children and to be the one to be with them at home after work. Though she supported the value of sacred study, she also did not appreciate the consequence of her husband not being at home as much to help her with the children and other needs of the home.

Fairness of roles is a theme likely to surface for a couple in many marriages (Claffey & Mickelson, 2009). Cultural awareness around the expected or likely roles within Orthodox Jewish couples serves to create a foundation for a counselor to begin working with clients. Even within the participants in this study there was variability of expected roles within marriage. A counselor may benefit from knowing that Orthodox Jewish society may lean more in one direction than another regarding roles, but the self perception of roles of a particular client needs to be discovered, as well as how the client sees this differing from the expected societal roles of other Orthodox Jews.

Some literature has found that marital dissatisfaction often arises when a couple transitions to parenthood (Shapiro, Gottman, & Carrere, 2000). This was not supported

by any of the data gathered from the interviews for this research. In fact, the participants who spoke about children spoke of it as a reason to increase their practice and excitement surrounding their religious and spiritual involvement in Orthodox Judaism. This result is supported by other research from Belsky and Rovine (1990) who discovered that those who look at marriage primarily as a romantic relationship are more likely to feel dissatisfaction than those who view raising children as one of the primary purposes of marriage. It is possible that directly after the participants became parents there was a degree of marital dissatisfaction. However, it did not surface in the interviews.

Implications of the Study

The implications for counseling are significant for this study as the results provide a more nuanced and deep understanding of what drives this particular cultural group. Providing counseling is always possible, even when the counselor knows little about the individual looking for help. At times this can even be viewed as an advantage in that the client knows that the counselor is not coming with any preconceived notions, values, or judgments of the client. However, these same reasons also speak to why a client might not feel comfortable. Often, clients looking for understanding or support will look for it from someone whose value system they share and who understands the intricacies of a particular culture. Having to explain one's outlook to someone not of that culture or not acquainted with the intricacies of that culture can at times leave the client feeling misunderstood or even defensive.

To that end, the research presented here speaks to two things. Firstly, one can become more cognizant of the particular values, beliefs, and outlook of clients of the

Orthodox Jewish faith through understanding the ideas shared by the participants in this study. This might take place in a counselor's training where counselor educators present ideas that speak to a deep understanding of the Orthodox Jewish culture. Secondly, counselors will have more understanding when a client might benefit from a counselor that shares the faith of the client and is therefore much more intimately acquainted with the intricacies of whatever it is they are struggling with from a religious or spiritual perspective. The following paragraphs will discuss in more detail the implications of the results outlined in chapter three.

Orthodox Judaism Enhancing Marriage

Attraction is an important component of any relationship, it being the initial push that leads to a desire to connect to another person. What was clear from this research is that the participants in this study felt that religion and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism played a big part, or perhaps was the primary component of attraction to their partners. This appears to be born from the fact that members of the Orthodox Jewish population grow up with or develop a belief that Orthodox Judaism is not something separate from themselves, like a hobby or even a profession, but rather something deeply connected to the core of who they are and therefore of vital importance. As others have found, spirituality has shown efficacy in enhancing marital relationships. (Beach et al., 2011)

Interestingly, it is not as simple as listing the religious or spiritual level of an individual and then making sure it matches well to the person they are interested in. Rather, it appears to be something much more idiosyncratic for each individual, what

they find most important within Orthodox Judaism. For example, Chana spoke of her attraction to her husband stemming from his sincerity in the things he would do religiously, and the way he would do them. It was important to her that he not make others uncomfortable in his or her family of origin by doing certain things in an overtly religious fashion, not wanting to alienate them. She felt this made him a "very special person" thereby increasing her level of attraction to him. She did also speak of his commitment to Orthodox Judaism as being something that attracts her to him, so this was a necessary component. That being said it seemed to be other elements, on top of his commitment to Orthodox Judaism, that really put her husband into another category for her.

Similarly, others also spoke, not only of wanting someone that was at least close to their level of Orthodox Judaism, but also displayed other idiosyncratic features that they clearly found attractive. For example Levi spoke of being attracted to his partner's inspiration and Avi and Naftali spoke of their partners' spiritual outlook on life. Inspiration of a couple in the context of Orthodox Jewish practice can come from a variety of areas and generally serves as a foundation of shared growth (Schnall, 2006).

When the participants spoke of the foundation of religion within Orthodox Judaism, a number of them spoke about adherence to religious law taking precedence over the relationship of a marriage. For example, Naftali pointed out that if his wife were to not keep kosher or go to the mikvah [ritual bath] he would not be able to continue his relationship with her. In today's culture this may seem to be a strange idea, that something would take precedence over a relationship. That is not to say that the

conclusion overwhelmingly from this study is that religious law takes precedence over a relationship, but that was the conclusion drawn by a few of the participants. Therefore, it is important to know that this feeling or belief is certainly a possibility for some members of Orthodox Judaism.

In any case, most of the participants spoke of Orthodox Judaism being foundational for their marriages, or as a structure for how they operated and conducted their lives. As one participant put it, to have a marriage without the structure of Orthodox Judaism in the background would be like a "soul without a body". This idea of structure was important to a number of the participants as they felt that it added stability to their lives. Some of the ideas of structure within Orthodox Judaism might include synagogue attendance, community events surrounding assorted Jewish holidays, shared meals with other families from the Orthodox Jewish community on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, as well as an endless number of rules, things done, or avoided to comply with Orthodox Jewish law (Schnoor, 2002). One of the most complex set of laws in this area would be those of keeping kosher. These are the Jewish dietary laws that govern when particular foods may or may not be eaten as well as how those foods have to be prepared. This is relevant because it does create structure and that while some foods may be acquired from a regular grocery store, others such as meat or chicken need to be purchased from someone that prepares the meat or chicken according to Jewish law. This then means that the Jewish family will only eat in certain restaurants that follow this tradition. As one can see, laws about food leads to where one has to shop, which restaurants one will go to,

and the particular care one has to take to maintain the dietary laws. This is just one example of how the Orthodox Jewish lifestyle creates a structure.

In addition to the structure a married partners will have living life as an Orthodox Jewish couple, the beliefs stemming from Orthodox Judaism about the marriage were also a significant component that served to create a strong foundation for some of the participants. One of the participants, Avi, hinted at this when he spoke of feeling that him meeting and marrying his wife was a spiritual event. Orthodox Jews believe in the idea of divine providence, that much of what happens in this world is not random but rather meant to be. Therefore finding and being in a relationship with one's partner is an expression of something divine. This serves to stabilize the relationship by giving it roots during more challenging moments (Schumm, Bollman, & Jurich, 1982).

Taking it one step further, it is important for counselors and counselor educators to be aware of the impact Orthodox Judaism serves in the growth and deepening of the marriage relationship. In other words not only is Orthodox Judaism foundational in establishing a marriage but also plays a pivotal role in helping the marriage grow. From the outside it is easy to look at the restrictive laws of Orthodox Judaism as being an impediment at times to marriage. One example brought up by some of the participants is the idea of physical separation that happens for about half of every month for a couple. This is a restricted time when a couple cannot physically be together and on the surface is a challenging time to connect or be close. With that, it is important to view this component from the perspective of the Orthodox Jewish client. As a number of the participants noted, the time of separation serves as a boundary or awareness around the

time when the couple cannot be together thereby enhancing the time when they can. As one participant noted, every month when he and his wife get back together, the excitement is increased and there is enhancement resulting from having been separated for about two weeks. Similarly another of the participants emphasized how there is also a spiritual awareness that results from observing these laws because she feels it brings a spiritual component into her sex life. Of course, it is not necessary for a counselor to have the same belief as the client, but it is important to understand and respect where the client is coming from and where the client chooses to place his/her priorities. Furthermore, counselors may benefit from the awareness that sexual issues may be particularly challenging for a client to bring up with a counselor and certainly when there are added religious components (Paul, et al., 2000).

A number of other features of Orthodox Judaism surfaced throughout the interviews where participants spoke of areas where they could connect with their partner. Some of the other examples included the community aspects of Shabbos [Sabbath], prayer, and religious learning. There is always room to have a deeper understanding of these or other aspects of Orthodox Jewish life and volumes can be written about each subject. However the goal of this study is not necessarily to explain each of these in depth but rather to point out that these components are significant and hold meaning for members of Orthodox Judaism. These areas colored the outlook of these participants and to look at them without understanding these components would be to look at them incompletely. Were an Orthodox Jewish client to come in for counseling surrounding marriage, it would be important to know that it is likely that the client's Orthodox

Judaism played a pivotal role in choosing his/her partner, giving structure and foundation to his/her married life, and likely factors significantly in how this client wishes to grow with his/her partner.

Marriage Enhancing Orthodox Judaism

As pointed out in the previous chapter, not only was it found that Orthodox Judaism enhances marriage for these participants, it is also the case that the marriage helps to enhance these participants' experience of Orthodox Judaism. A few of the participants were really talking about modeling when they brought up how the focus on their children drove them to an enhanced experience of Orthodox Judaism. It was often memories of their own childhoods that inspired them to want to give some of the positive experiences they recall to their own children. Avi remember being excited about Jewish holidays and he contrasted that with not being so enthusiastic in the present. But, because he wanted to transmit similar enjoyments to his own children he put in effort to fashion experiences that would transmit these feelings to them. He was now the architect for his children that his parents once were for him. The home is where the process of religious transmission gets its beginning and its emotional energy (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001). Dinah added another component to this idea of modeling because to her it was important to show her children that their parents chose to connect with each other and them through "holy" activities.

Another interesting thing to note is that the transmission of excitement to the children worked in a feedback loop where the parents, when seeing the excitement and enjoyment of the children, became excited themselves and were more inspired to

continue in that way. Rivka was one of the ones who shared this aspect of seeing her children progress religiously and this in turn inspiring her. Chana, too, spoke of this inspiration, adding that she has become more peaceful in how she views her role in religion as result of having children, seeing how Jewish law caters to a mother or father that has responsibilities towards their children. All this is to say that children largely served as an impetus to maintain and grow religiously and spiritually for many of the participants of this study. Knowing this, a counselor may steer that conversation to discuss in detail the role a couple's children play in their experience of Orthodox Judaism and consequently their marriage.

Challenges of Not Having Children

These ideas all lead to other implications for a counselor or counselor educator. It becomes apparent how important children are in the context of Orthodox Jewish life. While it is often true that children are a source of stress for couple, and this is certainly true for Orthodox Jewish couples as well, children also serve as a reason for inspiration in Orthodox Jewish life as well as a vital component of the structure around which many family components are arranged. What this means is that it is important for an Orthodox Jewish couple to have children. According to these interviews, without this focus a couple would be lacking a serious source of growth in their Orthodox Judaism as well as in their marriage. Additionally, for this balance to be maintained a couple needs a healthy relationship with their children. Of course this is true of all families (Goode, 1963; Olson, 1988). But perhaps there is an additional component in Orthodox Jewish

life because all of these components, Orthodox Judaism, relationship with children, and the marriage relationship are so intertwined.

Because so much of the cultural life of Orthodox Jews is built around family components, it can be particularly challenging when a couple does not have children. One obvious challenge in this situation is similar to what was spoken of in chapter three about being single as an Orthodox Jew. Similar to what was presented there, so much of Orthodox Jewish life centers around a particular family structure. The most important component appears to be being part of a couple. Without this many aspects of Orthodox Jewish life become uncomfortable or are not available. While not as severe, a couple without children would also miss out on many of the communal aspects that center around children, such as events that take place in the Jewish day schools or communal events for children surrounding the Jewish holidays.

As mentioned previously many of the participants in the study found inspiration in their desire to transmit their Judaism to their children. This transmission process serves as a healthy focus for many couples after having children (Shapiro, Gottman, & Carrere, 2000). A couple without children would not have this source of inspiration and would therefore need to generate it on their own. The implications go further because as was found with the participants in this study, Orthodox Judaism serves to enhance the relationship. Therefore without this enhancement of Orthodox Judaism, resulting from decreased inspiration or involvement due to not having children, there would likely be decreased enhancement of a couple's relationship. Therefore, it seems likely that the relationship would suffer. It would be interesting to note how this

compares to a couple of a different culture that also does not have children and the challenges they might face in maintaining their relationship.

The latter two themes presented in the results section of the study deal with how the religious and spiritual aspects of Orthodox Judaism and marriage detract from one another. During the discovery process for this study, the results gathered of the positive impact of Orthodox Judaism on married life came across strongly. While it is true that the conversations with the participants in this study yielded a lot of material that speaks to the positive impact they feel Orthodox Judaism has had on their married lives, it is important to gather both sides and view realistically the number of challenges presented by leading an Orthodox Jewish lifestyle and its possibly negative or harmful effect on significant relationships. The implication for counseling and counselor educators is of course obvious. To gain more depth of understanding and nuance in how key factors impact one another will only lead to an increased capacity to validate clients and have the wherewithal to jump into the deep end with them in dealing with the murkiness of cultural impact on significant life processes (Langman, 1999; Schnall, 2006).

Orthodox Judaism Detracting from Marriage

The results spoke of a number of the participants sharing their views on the challenges of having a different level of spirituality or religiosity within Orthodox Judaism from their partners, how that impacts their marriages. To be fair, a number of the participants only spoke about this hypothetically, because it is a path they choose not to take. For example Dinah shared that she consciously makes the decision to join her husband in the religious activities he is excited about for the sake of a relationship with

him as well as for their children. She even went so far as to say that even if she is not genuinely interested or as excited as her husband she will pretend to be, because she feels that were she not to do this it would hurt her marriage. Similarly, Naftali also spoke hypothetically about the implications of not keeping the same religious laws, the stress on the relationship that would result, and what he considers the likely failing outcome.

It is easy to discount the fears or hypothetical challenges that these participants present, but at the same time most of them mentioned some aspect of this and it therefore appeared to be a fairly well accepted understanding and belief about the nature of the impact of Orthodox Judaism on marriage. Whether coming at it from a strictly religious viewpoint dealing with the Halacha [Jewish law] or from the emotional point of view such as the lack of connection or excitement from one partner, there appears to be a culturally accepted understanding that partners in a marriage need to have a minimum shared level of commitment to Jewish law as well as at least a respect for the enthusiasm one partner displays for a particular area of Orthodox Jewish life. Respect between partners is paramount within a marriage but especially in matters connected strongly to self identification (Goodman & Dollahite, 2004).

To be clear, and to look at this more subtly, it would be simplistic to say that partners must match on all levels or the relationship is doomed to fail. One of the participants, Rivka, spoke well when she described how her and her husband's level of commitment and connection to Orthodox Judaism has a somewhat cyclical aspect to it. She pointed out how sometimes one partner will be feeling more inspired or connected and at other times the other partner will be the one ahead. Her insight led her to the

conclusion that it is important for the partners to pull each other in one direction or another, so that they stay close to each other. Like this, one might compare the two partners in a marriage to two planets orbiting around a star. While one may be moving in one arc and the other at a different arc, they are nevertheless never far from each other as they travel in the same general direction.

It is also worth differentiating between different aspects of Orthodox Jewish life and the necessity of partners sharing the same level of commitment and practice. For Levi, it is not necessary for his wife to share his spiritual journey, to be focused on the same spiritual path he feels he is on. Like the others, he shares the view that the partners need to be in close proximity in regards to following Jewish law. However in terms of spiritual pursuits, he views that as more of an individual journey or “quest.” That being said he still felt it was important for his wife to support his interests, journey, or process of searching for what drives him. In any case, when the partners share their religious affiliation at minimum, the chances of marital satisfaction rise significantly (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2008). More spirituality or religiosity pursued by one partner is likely to also be beneficial as long as it is supported by one's partner.

These are important differentiations for a multicultural understanding of the Orthodox Jewish population. Counselor educators may point out the importance of looking at shared religious commitment when working with a couple. At the same time, a counselor may also want to probe each partner's individual pursuits in the spiritual and religious realm that may not be shared by the other partner. Whether these differences

are a source of conflict becomes a useful point of exploration for further understanding the couple's relationship.

Commitments of Time, Money, and Effort

In addition to the overarching need for partners to maintain a shared level of commitment and practice to Orthodox Judaism, there were a few other areas that emerged from the interviews which are important for counselors and counselor educators to be aware of when working with this population. From the interviews three general areas of contention were prominent for the participants in the study as ways in which Orthodox Judaism presents challenges for marriage.

Time is a commodity that is limited for everyone and nothing can be done to increase the hours of the day. Being an Orthodox Jew requires a large commitment of time for a number of reasons (Schnoor, 2002). Men are expected to pray three times a day. While women may pray if they choose, they do not have the same requirement. For men, prayer is best accomplished in the synagogue together with at least a quorum of other Orthodox Jews. Therefore the normal schedule for a married man is to leave home first thing in the morning, usually quite early, and make his way to the synagogue where prayer lasts anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour. In the evening there are two more times for prayer, though each only lasts from 15 to 20 minutes. Many choose to be present in synagogue for these times as well, though many choose not to. These times for prayer usually represent the most significant impact on time for an Orthodox Jewish couple. Additionally, the value of study of the Torah [five books of Moses] as well as all derivative works is given high priority. To that end many Orthodox Jewish men have one

or more set times during the week when they attend a class or participate in some form of study. These are two of the most significant areas that are likely to impact the time the couple has together, though they are hardly the only ones. All this explanation is meant to give some level of understanding of the challenges a couple may face in having enough time together.

Because of distinct roles that men and women have within Orthodox Judaism, it sets the stage for families to be impacted in a fairly predictable way. It is more likely that the wife will be the one to deal with the children in the morning on her own (Ringel, 2007). This is not uncommon in the evenings either. It would be too difficult and naïve to sum up how all Orthodox Jewish women feel about this aspect of life, though it is probably safe to say that there are parts that are liked and parts disliked. Chana shared that she and her husband will sometimes fight about it though it is unlikely she would do it differently. Nevertheless, she does see it as a significant stress in her marriage.

Another significant source of stress for a marriage or family is their financial state (Shapiro, Gottman, & Carrere, 2000). Some of the financial stresses for an Orthodox Jewish couple include paying for Jewish day school, which can add up significantly when one has multiple children, the cost of observing Shabbos [Sabbath] and Jewish holidays, and the cost of other ritual obligations. It is interesting that for some participants this was the biggest stress that they face while for others it was significant but not something that bothered them above all else. It was interesting to hear from Rivka who grew up in a family that was Jewish but not Orthodox. She had a view of both worlds and perhaps for

that reason, for her, it was significantly more stressful, having seen how much easier it was for her parents.

Of the participants interviewed for this study, none shared that they were overwhelmed by this burden, just that it was a significant source of stress. It would be interesting to hear more thoughts, perhaps from those not as well off within the Orthodox Jewish community, where the stress of finance presents a greater challenge. I wonder how this impacts their level of spirituality and religiosity within Orthodox Judaism as well as how it interacts with their marriage.

Finally, the last area discovered in the interviews where Orthodox Judaism detracts from a marriage has to do with the laws of separation surrounding ritual purity. A few of the participants openly shared that there have been times when they felt too separated from their partner because of the particular laws governing physical closeness. From the interviews it appeared that this is an area that surfaces at times, usually during significant life events such as the birth of a child or loss of a loved one.

It occurs to this researcher that much of what may be helpful for a counselor or counselor educator to learn about and understand is quite simply the details of Jewish law. While Jewish law is broad, whole libraries having been written about it, the areas of Jewish law brought up in these interviews present a solid foundation for the areas a counselor and counselor educator can be aware of because of their likely impact on family and married life.

Marriage Detracting from Orthodox Judaism

The significance of discovering aspects of a couple's life from which the marriage relationship detracts is amplified when it affects an area deeply connected to each partner's self identification. As the participants identified in this study, the belief and practice of Orthodox Judaism is likely to be one of these areas for an Orthodox Jewish couple (Schnall, 2006). For counselor educators to properly represent the challenges that may arise within this culture, a clear picture of how these constructs interact is necessary. Counselors that have this understanding will benefit by being able to navigate this realm with a couple in the counseling environment.

As found in the interviews, the commitment of marriage can detract from an individual's experience of Orthodox Judaism. Similar to how time spent on religious obligations will take away time one has for being with one's partner, time spent with one's partner reduces time left for religious observance. This is interesting to note because it highlights the balancing act individuals have to play in prioritizing their relationships along with their Orthodox Jewish observance. This is not dissimilar from anyone else who has to balance commitments of time between a marriage and some other significant area. Perhaps these factors can be most closely compared to the balance between time for marriage and time spent at work. It is easy to justify spending more time at work because one can be said to be doing it for the sake of one's partner or family (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). This would be similar to how one might view spending more time in religious observance, where one is also doing it for the good of one's family, partner, or ideals they both value. The important part to realize here is that the time

commitments of religious observance are in addition to the commitments for work. While it is likely that all couples struggle with finding a healthy balance between time commitments for home and work, an Orthodox Jew may be further challenged in something that both value highly, additional commitments for Jewish observance. Counselors being aware of this additional challenge will be cognizant of the need to address the balance of time with an Orthodox Jewish couple.

It was interesting to hear from the participants how they go about finding this balance and it became clear that this is largely an individual, self-governing process. In other words each person has their individual values surrounding the particular expectations of Orthodox Judaism. These are then put into in the equation together with their partner's value system surrounding Orthodox Judaism. The result of this is likely why one person may choose to spend less time at synagogue in the evening while another may make a different choice. Most likely the tension arises when the value system from one partner does not match with the ensuing decision (Halford, Markman, Kling, & Stanley, 2003). Having some level of awareness of the particular challenges faced by clients struggling with this balance would likely help counselors navigate this realm with their clients.

A few of the participants were quite open about feeling pulled in so many directions. Ben spoke of feeling sapped of the spirituality from his life because of the obligations of marriage, children, and occupation. He compared how he feels now to when he was a child and was genuinely excited about the prospect of a Jewish holiday and the ritual or food that goes together with it. Perhaps counselors would find it useful

to explore with clients the exhaustion resulting from this cultural lifestyle along with the disappointment of not always feeling energized by what was once exciting.

It is interesting to look at how on the one hand, marriage and children drain the time and energy one has for religious or spiritual pursuits within Orthodox Judaism, while on the other hand they are such a foundational part to living an Orthodox Jewish lifestyle. Further study might uncover more clearly how strong an impact marriage has on one's time and energy and how these resources might therefore no longer be available to pursue spiritual or religious pursuits. This can then be compared to the priority given to pursuing Orthodox Judaism as a result of being married, both because of the marriage itself as well as the focus on children. This study only looked at the fact that there was an impact positively and negatively from each direction. However it did not look at the amount of that impact. Perhaps this is where a more quantitative method of study would be useful, to create a way to measure the impact of these factors on one's experience of Orthodox Judaism.

Impact of Singlehood on Orthodox Judaism

Finally, it is worthwhile for counselors and counselor educators to be aware of the cultural challenge of being single after a certain age within the Orthodox Jewish world. Perhaps this is relatable to a significant part of American culture where there is some level of discomfort in society when a person does not have a significant other (Dush & Amato, 2005). It could even be as simple as going to a restaurant for dinner alone. But even more significantly many family and communal events are likely to be a little bit more comfortable if one is already paired with a partner of some sort.

From this study one may conclude that being single in the world of Orthodox Judaism presents challenge. Firstly, as was pointed out in chapter three, so much of the Orthodox Jewish lifestyle has to do with family, community, and Jewish holidays or events that cater to family involvement. Secondly, it is likely that because of the increased awkwardness of participating in these aspects of Orthodox Judaism single persons are more likely to not participate, thereby impacting their practice and commitment towards Orthodox Judaism. As pointed out by Dinah, a few of her husband's siblings have been affected this way.

Therefore, were a counselor to work with a client having this cultural background, it is useful to be aware of the particular challenges this client might feel in not being married or involved in a relationship at the moment. Also, there is a good chance that this status impacts their self perceived involvement with Orthodox Judaism. While of course this involvement is a choice, it is also likely to come with feelings about oneself such as guilt, shame, failure, or freedom of choice (Bonelli et al., 2012).

Participants' Definitions of Spirituality and Religion

To begin looking at Orthodox Judaism it is important to look in depth at how past research has looked at religion and spirituality in general, and then see how these understandings fit with these concepts within Orthodox Judaism. To that end, the literature review of this study began with past studies in this area. In order to provide rich description from the participants of this study, as well as for them to think about during the interview, both spirituality and religiosity were explored in depth during the

interviews. In fact, it was fascinating to hear the descriptions that participants offered, to see how they were similar to each other as well as how they differed.

As one person mentioned in her interview, when being asked to define both of these terms, the difference can be subtle. That being said once each of the participants was asked to differentiate the terms, by and large they were able to do so easily. Not only that, but there was much more similarity between the participants than there were differences. For a few of the participants as soon as the terms religiosity and spirituality were translated into the Hebrew equivalents, terms often used by Orthodox Jews, there was even less ambiguity as to what the terms might refer to.

Religiosity within Orthodox Judaism was largely defined by the participants as having to do with the communal aspects of Orthodox Judaism, adherence to Halacha [Jewish law], and performance of ritual. The communal aspects included attendance at synagogue and participating in other community events connected to Jewish holidays. As far as Halacha, all the laws of Judaism are complex and the vast majority of areas spoken about by the participants were those connected to the kosher dietary laws, Shabbos [Sabbath], the Jewish holidays, and the laws of ritual purity or Mikvah. In regards to performance of ritual, the participants largely referenced ritual done in connection to one of the Jewish holidays such as having a Passover Seder or lighting candles on Chanuka. These definitions were largely shared by the participants in this study.

Where things became slightly more complex was when participants began speaking of the more spiritual aspects of Orthodox Judaism. For Chana, for example, the

spiritual aspects had to do with sincerity of feeling during faith based activities along with the emotional feeling that is connected to all of the religious aspects of Orthodox Judaism. She also spoke of respecting others and treating others well as being spiritual aspects for her. In other words, to be spiritual meant embodying the ideals of character she feels are emphasized by Orthodox Judaism.

From a different point of view, Levi shared a more philosophical definition of spirituality within Orthodox Judaism. He spoke of it as "an unbounded pursuit of something that is not attainable or something people try to achieve without a goal or end point, without a boundary to it." He also shared that it is "the search for God, as opposed to making yourself feel good about how holy and spiritual you are." In other words it is meant to be a selfless process or "quest." He also used the words "soul pursuit." Clearly, this is a much more elusive or subtle understanding of spirituality, rather different than Chana's more practical definition.

A number of the participants such as Avi, Ben, and Rivka, shared a view of spirituality within Orthodox Judaism that has to do with the energy or excitement one feels in pursuing and performing religious activities. For example, Avi shared that this might be dressing up in costume on the holiday of Purim and attending a party with one's family. He emphasized that this generates excitement and enjoyment that otherwise would not be there. Ben spoke about the excitement of a new intellectual or philosophical thought.

Though the definitions were fairly different for spirituality in Orthodox Judaism, nevertheless there seems to be a common thread that ran through them. One might

describe it as the more emotional aspects connected in some way to the religious aspects of Orthodox Judaism. In other words, while for some this was defined as clear and practical characteristics such as kindness or sincerity, and for others it took on a more philosophical nature, nevertheless they both seem to zero in on the emotional part connected to religious performance.

Because of this fairly similar definition of religiosity of Orthodox Judaism as well as an underlying similarity in looking at the spiritual aspects of Orthodox Judaism, this research was able to draw conclusions from the collective answers of the participants. Also, each of the participants was aware that the terms they were being asked to define were to help them look at Orthodox Judaism in a deep fashion and then connect this to marriage. It would be fair to say that for any religion there will always be some subtle differences in how members of that religion define it. But as long as there is an underlying similarity of understanding, they can be said to be speaking of the same construct. I believe that this is the case in this situation as well.

In addition, the variety of ideas and definitions of these terms within Orthodox Judaism provides rich understanding of the view of Orthodox Judaism in the eyes of its members. This alone is something to be valued and perhaps provides reason and a basis to look more deeply into these variations. As the saying goes, variety is the spice of life and I believe it is this variety that describes the beauty of any culture.

Limitations of the Study

No discussion of a body of research would be complete without looking at the limits of that study. A particular study is only meant to be a step in a much larger process

of developing knowledge. Therefore, it is important to note where the boundaries for the study lie so that the results are not interpreted in ways it was never meant to be understood. Also, the limitations provide a foundation to begin looking for ways to continue the research process.

The Terms Spirituality and Religiosity

When beginning this research, one of the first steps was to look through literature related to the background for this study. One of the areas explored in depth, and as presented in the literature review, was the area of spirituality and religiosity. Much was found about both spirituality and religiosity and how other researchers have defined the terms and explored their meaning in different contexts. Past research has also explored the relationship between spirituality, religiosity and marriage.

Though this provided a strong foundation to begin exploring similar constructs and their interaction with marriage for Orthodox Jews, it may have also contributed to a limiting factor for the participants of the study and the results that were gathered. The process of each interview began by asking each participant to define the terms spirituality and religiosity within the context of Orthodox Judaism. Admittedly, some found these terms confusing at first, especially to differentiate between the two. That being said, each of the participants was able to draw a strong distinction between the terms and relate them to their Orthodox Judaism. However, it now being the reflection part of this process, I wonder if it would have made more sense to focus less on the terms spirituality and religiosity of Orthodox Judaism and more on the term Orthodox Judaism. In other

words, was it necessary for the participants to differentiate between these terms in order to gather the data relevant to this research?

Data supporting this conclusion, that the term Orthodox Judaism alone would have been sufficient, can be drawn from the fact that the participants' answers to questions that differed only in the use of the term spirituality or religiosity overlapped or were too similar to differentiate. While the participants each have their own view of what each of these terms refer to, it appeared that they were still thinking broadly in terms of Orthodox Judaism rather than the particular construct of spirituality or religiosity. Indeed, one of the participants actually stated that the two are so intertwined for her that it does not make sense to differentiate.

Another reason to use the term Orthodox Judaism, or at least the term spirituality and religiosity of Orthodox Judaism, without the differentiation between the two, would be because these terms are idiosyncratic, even for individuals who are members of a very specific religious and cultural group. While the term Orthodox Judaism is also likely to have individualistic meaning, from what was gathered from these interviews, there is likely to be significant overlap, enough to conclude with a good degree of confidence that the participants are speaking of the same thing. Lastly, I found myself using the terms spiritual and religious together when analyzing the data, looking at the results, and drawing conclusions, as if their meaning was more relevant when considering them both as one. Before the research was done it seemed like there might be meaning in differentiating between the two. As the process wore on it became more meaningful to speak of them together and think of them as one.

Limitations of Data

It is worth pointing out that of the four themes developed from the data of this study, the two that looked at how the religion and spirituality of Orthodox Judaism detracts from marriage as well as how marriage detracts from the religion and spirituality, were the ones with the least amount of supporting material. After going through the process of the interviews, coding the data, and organizing it into themes I became aware that I felt self-conscious about this study appearing to be an advertisement for the benefits of leading an Orthodox Jewish lifestyle, especially when married. Even when writing up the results and throughout this discussion, at times it has felt like the benefits strongly outweigh the challenges or negatives.

There are a few interesting ideas that emerge from exploring why this may be the case. First of all, the ones who chose to participate in the study were self-selecting. They knew broadly what the study was meant to entail and were therefore more likely to have positive things to say about Orthodox Judaism as well as marriage. To commit to doing this interview and then to follow through required an interest to commit time and effort towards this process. My feeling is that it is more likely to be the case when someone is feeling good or positive in both of these realms rather than negative. Therefore the data that was collected and the results that were formed are likely to be skewed in this positive direction.

Additionally, for these participants and for any that potentially might have been a part of this study, it is much more comfortable to speak about positive feelings and viewpoints rather than the negative or unpleasant feelings that might be associated both

with Orthodox Judaism and especially with marriage. It was interesting that even when the participants were asked directly if there were any areas that came to mind of how Orthodox Judaism and marriage detract from one another, a few of the participants only spoke of these areas hypothetically. They shared that they could imagine this or that aspect detracting from marriage or Orthodox Judaism, not directly connecting it to themselves. This was not true for all the participants. Some of them did share direct examples that were very helpful and formed the basis for these themes. However, even for them it is likely more difficult to think of, let alone speak about in detail and depth.

Perhaps to overcome these challenges it is worth considering designing the interview process in such a way that some of the more challenging aspects of Orthodox Jewish life as well as marriage are spoken of in more detail. To that end one might design particular, pointed questions that ask participants to consider these areas more strongly. This certainly seems worth considering for a follow-up study or for studies studying similar constructs.

Of course, it is worth considering that despite these results appearing like an advertisement, there is more enhancement that happens from the interaction of Orthodox Judaism and marriage than negative effect, at least for these participants. Still at this point I do not think it is safe to draw a conclusion about the degree of enhancement or detraction that marriage and Orthodox Judaism have on each other but rather to only conclude that both of these exist.

Transferability of the Study

The study was only meant to look at the religion and spirituality of Orthodox Judaism and its interaction with marriage. Of course it would be only natural to want to know more about how the religion and spirituality of other faiths interact with marriage as well. Although conclusions cannot be drawn from this study regarding other religions, this study does suggest that this would be a fruitful area to pursue.

Speaking to this, a story that Ben told during his interview was insightful and worth sharing, though it did not fit into the particular themes gathered for this study. Ben told an anecdote about his boss traveling to Italy, to the Vatican City, where he had a chance to meet the Pope. He said that his boss sent him a video showing the Pope giving him a blessing and speaking with him. Ben said that he cried when he watched the video and when he showed it to his wife she cried as well, being so moved. When Ben showed it to another coworker who was not religious, she thought it was nice but did not appear moved. Ben shared this story to point out that though his boss is Catholic and he is Jewish they hold a deep respect for each other's faith. It is for this reason that when they are traveling or working late on a Friday afternoon his boss will go out of his way to make sure that Ben will have time to make it home by sundown on Friday night for Shabbos [Sabbath].

This story is shared to suggest that perhaps there is an underlying characteristic shared by people of many faiths. Perhaps this characteristic is one that, similar to the results presented here, interact with marriage in similar ways. While only a thought at this point, it is encouraging to have hints of these ideas even from the data gathered here.

Future Research

As the necessary steps are taken along the path of any research study, thoughts about new variables discovered, variations in method, and other ideas not previously considered occur, making one wonder what results might be different if something were changed. This study would not be complete if these thoughts were not considered and contemplated. Perhaps this will help clarify where this study belongs among the collective library of research.

Varied Ways to Enhance a Marriage

The point of this research, as stated at the outset, was to look at how spirituality and religiosity within Orthodox Judaism interacts with marriage. It was found that Orthodox Judaism both enhances and detracts from marriage, though the amount of data supporting the effect of enhancement of marriage was greater. Through the data gathering and analysis processes, I found myself wondering if it would make sense to compare the enhancement of marriage effected by Orthodox Judaism to the enhancement of marriage from other sources.

In fact, one of the questions from the interviews asked the participants their opinion on this point. The results were mixed, with a few of the participants feeling that Orthodox Judaism is likely to enhance the marriage more than other areas. They felt this is likely because Orthodox Judaism is such a significant part of their lives, imbuing deeper meaning into virtually every area of life. There was one participant who felt that if she did not connect to her husband and her children through Orthodox Judaism there would be other things to help them connect, such as hobbies or shared activities.

It is easy to become excited from the strong views expressed by the participants in this study. However to be accurate and one step closer to the truth, one must consider the possibility that it is not so much Orthodox Judaism, or even religion or spirituality in general that allows a marriage to be more enhanced, but more simply, having anything to connect over in a deep way would provide a similar enhancement. Further study of a similar nature would likely answer this question. One might look for similar descriptions of excitement, connection, or meaning to draw a conclusion.

Methods of Sampling

The primary goal of any type of research is to come to some sort of understanding or some level of truth. Sometimes the truth allows one to take what one has learned and translate it to other areas where it might apply. Other times that truth really only applies to the particular population, area, or subject being studied. This research has the goal of looking at the Orthodox Jewish population and coming to some level of understanding of how the role of religiosity as well as spirituality within Orthodox Judaism interacted with marriage.

While the idea of purposive sampling was intentional in this study, I still wonder if the correct conclusions are being drawn based on the responses gleaned from the participants of the study. One of the things that make me wary to draw broad conclusions even to this small subset of the general population is that these participants are more likely to be focused and interested in the areas of spirituality and religiosity within Orthodox Judaism, perhaps even more than other Orthodox Jews. When I think about the process used to gather the participants for this study, I realize openly that only

participants who felt confident to discuss areas of spirituality and religiosity, and perhaps also feel they have played a significant role in their lives would have responded positively to the prospect of sharing intimate details of their own lives having to do with these concepts. In fact, I think it likely that there are many members of the Orthodox Jewish population who have quite different views of religion and spirituality, and the particular role that these play in how they formed their marriage relationships as well as how they maintain and think about that relationship.

An obvious further area to explore would be to think about a way to gather participants that consider themselves to be members of Orthodox Judaism but at the same time do not put as much stress on the areas of spirituality and religiosity within Orthodox Judaism. This would be challenging because the most obvious way is to gather members of Orthodox Jews and asked them to participate in the study without telling them what the study was about. While it creates an ethical challenge, they would not be self-selecting by choosing to participate only if they have particular interests in the area of spirituality and religiosity of Orthodox Judaism. Further thought is necessary to develop a method to overcome this weakness for such a study.

Variations of Population

It became increasingly clear while exploring the development of ideas in this study that there are so many more areas to investigate in detail. As a result of gathering the data presented by the participants, and then through the analysis of the data, several of the ideas to emerge spoke of aspects of Orthodox Judaism or marriage that were only relevant to a particular part of the population. For example one of the ideas that surfaced

was the challenge that single people face in the world of Orthodox Judaism. While another idea spoke to the enhanced excitement a couple may feel through practicing faith with their children and how they may seek to transfer that emotion or excitement of Orthodox Judaism to their children.

All this brings to light further areas to consider that would allow for a better understanding of a more varied population within the Orthodox Jewish world. For this study, only participants that had been married were considered. However there are so many different ways that one can further categorize participants. For example one can look at those married but are now divorced, those married but without children, those married that divorced and are now remarried, those never married, etc. It is beyond the scope of this study to draw any meaningful conclusions that would apply to any particular subset of the population of Orthodox Jews. There certainly seems to be data to support dividing the broad category of married Orthodox Jews into more particular categories that can access more subtle and interesting data.

Additionally, because children figured so prominently as a source of motivation and inspiration for parents within marriage, it might be interesting to separate the time period in life for parents before they have children and the time after they have children. For a couple that have been parents for more than a few years, it might be challenging to remember back that far. The data gathered from their most recent experiences is likely to be more accurate and complete. Nevertheless some of these shortcomings can be overcome by focusing on couples at different stages of life. For example, one can include couples that are married without children, and then also interview couples

married that more recently had children, and finally, include couples that have had children for 10 or more years. In fact, one might consider gathering data from the children's perspective. This could mean those that are children at present or adults remembering their experiences children. A couple of the participants did in fact recount memories from when they were children. A study more focused on this particular area would likely lead to some rich data.

Conclusion

It was thought at the outset of this research that the study was focused. It concentrated, not on all people, and not only on a particular religion, but on a small subset of that particular religion, Orthodox Jews. Furthermore, the goal was only to look at married individuals within this Orthodox Jewish population. When all is said and done, even this very focused study appears broad in hindsight. Perhaps it is the nature of all research to create just as many, if not more, questions than the ones it thought to answer.

This study set out to look at the interaction of Orthodox Judaism with marriage. Its purpose was not to have a conclusion from the outset and look for supporting evidence, but rather to enter into the process of research with an open mindset, to discover the results that emerged. It was hypothesized that there would be interaction between these constructs and the resulting data gathered from the participants supported this expectation. Participants spoke enthusiastically about the way Orthodox Judaism enhances their marriages, noting such areas as attraction to one's partner, building the foundation for the marriage, and leading to growth and deepening of the relationship.

Likewise participants also spoke of how their marriages serve to enhance their Orthodox Judaism, many of them focusing on children being a significant driver for reasons to maintain and grow their Orthodox Judaism. As well, the interviews brought to light the idea that Orthodox Judaism can detract from a marriage in certain ways. This was particularly true when one partner does not share the same level of spirituality or religious observance within Orthodox Judaism as the other partner. They also spoke to the commitments of time, money, and effort within Orthodox Judaism detracting from the experience of marriage, as well as restricting at times the physical closeness of a couple, challenging their relationship. A number of the participants referenced the time and energy balance that they struggle with, such that when these commodities are prioritized towards their marriage it is sometimes at the cost of an individual's or couple's experience of Orthodox Judaism. The particular challenge of living a single life in a culture where children and marriage are so highly prioritized came to light, despite this not being the focus of this study nor any of the participants themselves having this challenge at present. Also, the role of the community was explored in reference to how it interacts with the Orthodox Judaism of marriage partners. This, too, was not an original focus of the study but seemed to be prevalent and important enough for a number of the participants to observe.

My hope is that the original questions were at least somewhat answered. Even if the questions remain, they are at the very least informed by more information and a deeper understanding of the complexities of the constructs presented here, along with the complexities of their interaction. I feel it worth saying that having gone through this

process of research, gathering data, developing the results, and finally relating it back to the field of counseling and counselor education, I have a new understanding and appreciation for this process that I am quite sure I would not have without having gone through it. One can only gain such an intimate understanding of these constructs through hearing them from the mouths of those experiencing them, looking at the data from multiple angles, and pushing oneself to think about the endless ways these constructs might interact. I found myself thinking about some of the conclusions drawn from the study even as I walked around in my day-to-day life. I found myself relating the ideas developed here to other questions. This felt healthy, as if these ideas were evolving, growing, taking on a life of their own in my mind. The structured and creative process of committing these thoughts, ideas, and findings to paper served to further clarify and deepen this research. As a Jewish sage, Rabbi Dovber of Lubavitch, observed,

To accurately commit to writing ideas that one has conceived requires a great deal of effort and exertion. Even if one has developed and grasped an idea, expressing it via the written word demands deeper thought and greater scrutiny of the idea... The written word is highly defined and delineated, more so than the articulated word. The more an idea is defined, the less it can tolerate any idea that is even slightly inconsistent with its message. Therefore, more thought and effort must be invested in writing to ensure that the message is precise and unclouded by anything that might detract from it. The written word is thus the purest and truest form of expression, with no extraneous or missing detail. (Schneuri, 1821, p. 200)

While I do not believe this research is complete or perfect, this process has engendered in me an appreciation for the broadening of ideas through the limitation of written words.

It is a humbling process, coming to realize that even in a distinct area the complexity of people is never easily answered and the uniqueness of an individual will never fit so perfectly into a specific set of rules. But this is the beauty that one comes to appreciate through this process, that the purpose is not to fully answer any question but rather to continue advancing, in some measure, our collective understanding of people.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval

RE: IRB # 16-388 entitled "A Phenomenological Study of How Orthodox Jews Experience Spirituality and Religiosity Within the Context of Marriage"

Hello,

The Kent State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your Annual Review and Progress Report for continuing review purposes. The protocol approval has been extended and is effective:

July 22, 2017 through July 21, 2018

For compliance with:

DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects (Title 45 part 46), subparts A, B, C, D & E

**A copy of the IRB approved consent form may be attached to this email if the study is still recruiting in person. This "stamped" copy is the consent form that you must use for your research participants. It is important for you to also keep an unstamped text copy (i.e., Microsoft Word version) of your consent form for subsequent submissions.*

Federal regulations and Kent State University IRB policy requires that research be reviewed at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk, but not less than once per year. The IRB has determined that this protocol requires an annual review and progress report. The IRB will try to send you an annual review reminder notice by email as a courtesy. **However, please note that it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to be aware of the study expiration date and submit the required materials.** Please submit review materials (annual review form and copy of current consent form) one month prior to the expiration date.

HHS regulations and Kent State University Institutional Review Board guidelines require that any changes in research methodology, protocol design, or principal investigator have the prior approval of the IRB before implementation and continuation of the protocol. The IRB must also be informed of any adverse events associated with the study. The IRB further requests a final report at the conclusion of the study.

Kent State University has a Federal Wide Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP); [FWA Number 00001853](#).

To search for funding opportunities, please sign up for a free Pivot account at http://pivot.cos.com/funding_main

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office at [330-672-2704](tel:330-672-2704) or researchcompliance@kent.edu.

Doug Delahanty | IRB Chair | [330.672.2395](tel:330.672.2395) | ddelahan@kent.edu

Tricia Sloan | Coordinator | [330.672.2181](tel:330.672.2181) | psloan1@kent.edu

Kevin McCreary | Assistant Director | [330.672.8058](tel:330.672.8058) | kmccrea1@kent.edu

Paulette Washko | Director | [330.672.2704](tel:330.672.2704) | pwashko@kent.edu

APPENDIX B
RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Appendix B

Recruitment Email

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Sholom Stern and I'm a student in the Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral program at Kent State University. I'm in the process of working on a dissertation looking at the experience of religion and spirituality in the context of marriage for Orthodox Jews. While religion and spirituality have been studied before, hardly any research has looked at these in the context of Orthodox Jews. With this research I'm hoping to fill that gap.

I'm contacting potential candidates to participate in my study. This would involve agreeing to be interviewed one or two times for 60 to 90 minutes. I'm looking for people that consider themselves Orthodox Jews, have been married or are married for at least two years, and are at least 18 years old. The questions we'd be exploring during these interviews are how do religiosity and spirituality affect one's marriage relationship and how does one's marriage affect religiosity and spirituality.

Throughout this process I'm working with two advisors, Dr. Jason McGlothlin, PH.D. and Dr. Martin Jencius, PH.D. Additionally, this study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Kent State University, which screens all studies to ensure safety and confidentiality.

If you are willing to participate please contact me at (216)245-5095 or via email at sstern2@kent.edu.

Thank you in advance for considering participating in this research.

Sholom Stern, MA, PCC

Doctoral Candidate,

Counseling and Human Development Services, Kent State University

APPENDIX C
PARTICIPANT SCREENING FORM

Appendix C

Participant Screening Form

The Experience of Religion and Spirituality in the Context of Marriage for Orthodox Jews

Please fill out the following demographic information and return this form in the envelope provided. All of your answers will be confidential.

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____ Race: _____ Marital Status: _____

Years Married: _____

What branch of Judaism do you most strongly identify with? _____

How long have you considered yourself a member of this branch of Judaism? _____

Please share your understanding of the term spirituality.

Please share your understanding of the term religion.

Are you willing to speak about your marriage, how it is affected by spirituality and religion, as well as how your marriage affects your spirituality and religion? _____

APPENDIX D
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE FORM

Appendix D

Consent to Participate Form

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Study Title: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF HOW ORTHODOX JEWS EXPERIENCE SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOSITY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF MARRIAGE

Principal Investigator: Jason McGlothlin

You are being invited to participate in a research study. This consent form will provide you with information on the research project, what you will need to do, and the associated risks and benefits of the research. Your participation is voluntary. There will be no monetary compensation for participation in this study. Please read this form carefully. It is important that you ask questions and fully understand the research in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Purpose: This study explores how spirituality and religiosity are experienced by Orthodox Jewish couples within their marriage relationship. More specifically, how are Orthodox Jewish couples (where spirituality and religiosity is usually a central part of one's lifestyle) impacted by spirituality and religiosity in their most intimate relationship, marriage. There were two questions considered in light of the study:

1. How do the constructs of religiosity and spirituality within Orthodox Judaism affect the marriage relationship?
2. How does the construct of the marriage relationship affect religiosity and spirituality of Orthodox Jews?

Procedures

You will participate in an interview. The interview audio will be recorded. All interviews will take place in a mutually agreed upon, public location, such as a library. A space will be found where participants feel comfortable speaking freely without fear of being overheard or of being uncomfortable. Each interview will likely last from 60 to 90 minutes to fully cover all topics being researched. Participants are free to stay only as long as they choose. All that is asked is that you voluntarily share your information with the investigator, answering only what you choose. Following the interview the investigator will transcribe the interview and send the transcript to the participant to check for accuracy.

Audio and Video Recording and Photography

Participant's audio will be recorded during interviews. The audio will be stored on a flash drive which will be kept in a secure location under lock and key. After the study the files will be deleted. No other use of the audio recordings will be done.

Benefits

The potential benefits of participating in this study may include gaining insight into the depth of your relationship with your partners as well as an appreciation how different areas of your and your partner's life interact. For society, increased understanding about the interaction of marriage with spirituality and religiosity may lend insight to others with similar experiences.

Risks and Discomforts

Emotions or feelings may surface during the interview process and if there is significant distress in the person's life, on a personal level, or in regards to their marriage relationship, participants may become uncomfortable or experience distress. *Some of the questions we ask may be upsetting, or you may feel uncomfortable answering them. If you do not wish to answer a question, you may skip it and go on to the next question. If you would like referral for counseling, one will be provided.*

Privacy and Confidentiality

No identifying information will be collected. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from your study data, and responses will not be linked to you. The audio

recordings will be stored on a password protected flash drive. The flash drive will be kept in a locked, secure location. Only the investigator will have access to the recordings. After the interviews are transcribed, the transcriptions will be kept in a locked secure location.

Your study related information will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. Any identifying information will be kept in a secure location and only the researchers will have access to the data. Research participants will not be identified in any publication or presentation of research results; only aggregate data will be used.

Your research information may, in certain circumstances, be disclosed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees research at Kent State University, or to certain federal agencies. Confidentiality may not be maintained if you indicate that you may do harm to yourself or others.

Voluntary Participation

Taking part in this research study is entirely up to you. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect your health, welfare, or willingness to continue your study participation.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact Sholom Stern at 216-245-5095 or Dr. Martin Jencius or Dr. Jason McGlothlin at 330-672-2662. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330.672.2704.

Consent Statement and Signature

I have read this consent form and have had the opportunity to have my questions answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I understand that a copy of this consent will be provided to me for future reference.

Participant Signature

Date

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Appendix E

Interview Questions

How do you define spirituality?

How do you define religiosity?

How do you trace the development of your spirituality?

How do you trace the development of your religiosity?

How do you experience spirituality in the context of religious practice?

Did religiosity or spirituality play a role in choosing your marriage partner? How so?

Where have you noticed your spirituality interacting with your marriage relationship?

Where have you noticed your religiosity interacting with your marriage relationship?

How has your marriage affected your spirituality?

How has your marriage affected your religiosity?

How has your religiosity affected your marriage?

How has your spirituality affected your marriage?

Do you see spirituality playing a significant role in your marriage in the future?

Do you see religiosity playing a significant role in your marriage in the future?

How important is it for partners in a marriage to share a similar level of spirituality and religiosity?

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