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12. Jewish Identity and Religious Commitments in the American Midwest

Results of a Limited Study on Interfaith Upbringing

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Abstract

Previous research on continued religiosity in children of Jewish-Christian parents has provided mixed results. Most research indicates decreased religiosity, while recent research suggests a reverse of that trend among millennials. Through anecdotal evidence, we surmised that Jews raised in the Midwest by interfaith parents did not leave religion at the same rates as they do in other parts of the country. This paper reports the results of that research, suggesting that there is comparatively decreased religiosity among Jews raised in the Midwest by interfaith parents. While our conclusions are tentative because of a low response, we explore five case studies that help contextualize the competing trend lines from other research by outlining individual response sets.

Keywords: interfaith, Jewish, Judaism, Christian, Christianity, identity

Introduction

This paper is the result of a small research project on Jewish-interfaith religious identity in one portion of the American Midwest. Our initial hypothesis was that Jewish children raised with interfaith parents in the Midwest displayed fewer markers of religious decline than their peers in other parts of the country. While, for reasons discussed below, our research proved less fruitful than we initially wished, it evinces the complex dynamics of young people raised in a minority religion. This research demonstrates that there are few easy answers to questions about declining religious adherence, the role of interfaith or single-faith upbringing in continued religiosity, and that data – while useful – often fails to capture the complexities of individuals in the process of differentiating from their families in all ways, including religiously.

There is a standard narrative to intermarriage between Jewish and Christian individuals. After the Holocaust killed millions of Jews, Judaism found itself in a numerically precarious position. The number of marriageable partners in the tradition dropped, and many European Jews who fled to the United States found themselves without potential partners in their own tradition. Intermarriage between Jewish and other religious practitioners (especially, though not exclusively, Christian) increased significantly in the latter half of the twentieth century and increased in the early twenty-first century (Fishman et al.; Lazerwitz 1995), leading to fears of a “silent Holocaust,” in which Jewish children reared in an interfaith home might find themselves less inclined to practice Judaism (a minority religion in America) instead of Christianity (the overwhelming majority religion in America) or no religion altogether (Cowan and Cowan; Mayer; Rosenthal; Sussman and Alexander).

Most research from the last four decades demonstrated this decrease Jewish self-identification, particularly among children reared in Jewish-Christian interfaith families. This research suggests that interfaith marriage may lead to decreased religious participation in the married couple (Lazerwitz 1981; Pew Research Center 2016: 11, 26-36), meaning that interfaith couples raise their children with less overt religiosity. Some argue that the Jewish spouse who marries a non-Jew was less religiously inclined to begin with (Mayer), so may raise her children as nothing or as less observantly Jewish. Other research from the turn of the twenty-first century suggests that children in Jewish-Christian interfaith families are reared exclusively Jewish at a lower percentage than they are reared exclusively Christian, and children in these families are reared as interfaith at a lower percentage than being reared exclusively Christian (American Jewish Yearbook). The oldest scholarship, reaffirmed in this decade, claims that raising children as interfaith (between any two traditions) may decrease their overall religiosity or commitment to one or both traditions (Barron; Bossard and Boll; Peterson; Sklare; Vincent; Pew Research Center 2016: 12, 19-25), and that this pattern holds especially true in Jewish households (Fishman et al.; Lazerwitz 1981). The decrease in Jewish religious identity is particularly significant when the Jewish parent is male (Chinitz and Brown; Horowitz; cf. Pew Research Center 2016: 7-8, 14).

The most recent large-scale study on children of interfaith marriages, however, indicates that the earlier concerns may not carry into the millennial generation (Sasson et al. 2015a). Instead, it appears that millennials raised in Jewish-other interfaith households continue to identify as Jewish, but had less overtly Jewish educational experiences than their peers raised in Jewish-only households. My own anecdotal evidence indicated that declines in Jewish

religious practice or identity may not occur in some Midwestern cities. Through conversations with acquaintances in the Midwest, Jewish religious educators, and Jewish clergy, it appeared that being reared in an interfaith family in parts of the Midwest did not lead to a decline in Jewish self-conception or practice. We conducted a small study to explore this question. Zachary Smith directed the research project, co-wrote the survey instrument, interpreted the results, and wrote the paper. Ashley Young, a student researcher, co-wrote the survey and assisted in interpreting some of the results. Our research was approved by the Social and Behavioral Institutional Review Board (SB-IRB) of Creighton University (project number 899788) and complied with applicable laws, policies, best practices, and the requirements of our partner organization.

Survey

In mid-2016 we conducted a voluntary online survey of individuals aged 14 to 24 who had a personal or familial relationship with a Reform Jewish organization that provides Jewish educational services in a midsized Midwestern city. Despite offering modest incentives and despite our organizational partner's active involvement, our survey yielded a disappointing 8% response rate of only twenty-four individuals. Our survey explored differences in upbringing, self-conception, religious sentiment, religious beliefs, public and private religious practices, and conceptions of Judaism. We received responses from eight individuals raised with interfaith parents (though in households where Judaism was the primary religion), and fifteen raised with Jewish-only parents; one respondent presented a unique challenge to understanding our data (was not raised Jewish, but had one Jewish parent and an association with our partner organization) and was excluded from the overall data, but appears below as a case study. Determining "Jewish-only" proved tricky; we decided to include respondents with only one Jewish parent who nevertheless identified as being raised Jewish without any other religious commitments.

The 8:15 ratio of individuals raised with interfaith parents to individuals raised with single-faith parents matches roughly the Pew Research Center's data on Jewish intermarriage, with 35% of Jews married to a non-Jew (2015a: 47). Thus, while small, our results may represent a rough amalgam of modern American Jews. Portions of our study design were informed by the Pew Research Center's 2014 Religious Landscape Study telephone questionnaire, and inadvertently appeared similar to the Millennial Children of Intermarriage study (Sasson et al. 2015b). Most of the questions were optional and were clearly marked as such, as per requirements placed on our research by Creighton's SB-IRB. More than 80% of the respondents answered all questions.

There were fifty-two questions in the survey: forty-eight with preset responses from which the respondents selected (sometime with the ability to select more than one response) and four with open-ended text box responses. Three questions (age, gender, and parental religious identification) helped sort eligible respondents and provide basic demographic information. Nine questions sorted the respondents into categories based on their current religious identification and their religious upbringing and included one textbox response

question.¹ Five questions explored religious sentiment, with a branching option of one additional textbox response for certain answers to a question on religion's importance. These questions included openness to exploring other traditions, the importance of religion in the respondent's life, the respondent's level of relaxation during prayer, the respondent's level of relaxation when attending temple or church, and feelings of personal or spiritual happiness or satisfaction.

Twelve questions (divided into two sections, with the questions in each section displayed in random order) explored basic religious beliefs on divinity (two questions), an afterlife (five questions), religious texts (four questions), and the validity of living as a religious person (one question). There were six questions that focused on public religious practice and asked about church or temple attendance (four questions) or membership in a church or temple (two questions). Ten questions asked the respondents about their private religious practices, such as prayer, meditation, reading religious texts, fasting for Jewish holidays, keeping kosher, private practices for Jewish and Christian holidays, and to what extent religious teachings influence decision-making. The last set of questions (six total) asks about the respondents' conceptions of Judaism, including two textbox questions that allowed the respondents to describe Judaism and its meaning in their own words.

The data from this survey provides interesting avenues for exploration. While the response rate was too low to draw substantial quantitative conclusions, we can draw some general, tentative quantitative conclusions. The most intriguing data comes from the individual responses, explored in this paper as case studies. I start with the overall assumption of our research and how the responses affected the assumption, then move into general comments about the data, and conclude with five case studies presented by specific response sets.

Assumptions and Larger Conclusions

The overarching question for this research was whether children reared in Jewish-Christian interfaith households in certain parts of the U.S. – midsized Midwestern cities and large Midwestern towns – exhibit declining religiosity.² While some research points to upbringing by interfaith parents as a likely negative factor in continued Jewish religious practice, the latest research and anecdotal evidence did not match the trends of decline from earlier decades. Conversations with Jewish religious school educators, Jewish clergy, and children from Jewish-Christian interfaith parents indicated that the decline was not as sharp in parts of the Midwest. Perhaps, I surmised, there was something in the overall Midwestern ethos or among Jews in the Midwest that led to increased communal cohesion. My plan was to conduct this initial survey, then design a more comprehensive instrument for a second study on what made Judaism different in the Midwest. Our research, however, did not support this original assumption.

¹ Depending on responses to the religious sorting questions (which included general responses on religious self-conception), respondents could be asked as few as seven further questions.

² As per our partner's request to maintain the respondents' anonymity, we chose to randomly assign genders to the individual responses that we discuss.

Our results generally correspond with earlier research on the effects of being raised by interfaith parents. All respondents raised by Jewish-Christian interfaith parents had jettisoned their Christian identity, and some of the respondents had even jettisoned all or part of their Jewish identity, though the contours of “Jewish” were sometimes tricky to define.³ Moreover, respondents raised with Jewish-only parents attend temple, even on an occasional basis, at higher rates than respondents raised with parents of two faiths, although all respondents identified as *belonging* to a temple. The result is that the respondents raised with interfaith parents unidentified with religion in general (both Christianity and Judaism) at a higher rate than Jewish-only respondents, all of whom still identified as Jewish in some manner. The understanding of what *defines* Judaism, however, is different between the two groups. I will explore these results in more detail in the next section.

When asked, early in the survey, “What is your present religion, if any?” respondents were given the opportunity to select any number out of nine choices: Jewish (undifferentiated), Christian (broken down into Catholic and Protestant), “Other,” “spiritual but not religious,” “None (I am nothing),” atheist, agnostic, or “I am unsure of my current religion.” Respondents raised with Jewish-only parents all answered “Jewish,” with one also responding that she is spiritual but not religious, and another additionally responding that he is unsure of his current affiliation. Six out of the eight respondents raised with interfaith parents still practice Judaism, and two of those additionally identified as atheists. The two remaining respondents answered only that they are currently “agnostic” – meaning that they no longer practice Judaism (since they did not select “Jewish” as one of their current religions). Interestingly, despite a clear change from religious upbringing (e.g., jettisoning Christianity or no longer practicing Judaism), only one of the respondents raised with interfaith parents answered that she no longer practiced a religion with which she was raised (none of the respondents with only Jewish parents answered this way, understandably, as they all continue to practice Judaism). One of the currently agnostic respondents who no longer practices Judaism was reared in a household that emphasized Judaism over the Christian tradition. So at least in that instance, strength of emphasis did not correlate with continued practice.

The data, then, does not support our hypothesis that Midwestern Jewish children raised with interfaith parents decommit at a lower rate than their peers in other parts of the country, at least among the limited pool of respondents. It indicates nothing unique about being reared in the Midwest that creates stronger bonds to Judaism among children reared by interfaith parents, at least in the ages between their bar/bat mitzvah and two to three years post-college. Perhaps these children return to Judaism at a higher rate later in adulthood than children of interfaith parents raised in other parts of the country, but this study does not cover that question. All that the limited data revealed is a correlation between interfaith parents and a lack of current religious commitment, and that children with interfaith parents and who are

³ Throughout this paper, I use the language of “decommitment” to describe declining markers of Jewish religiosity, identity, observance, or orthopraxy. When speaking of decommitment, more than one of these markers exhibits decline. Declining markers of Judaism do not necessarily mean that these markers will continue to decline or will not increase in the future. What these markers indicate are current trends in young interfaith Jews that may or may not continue or turn in the future. I prefer decommitment to the usual term “deconversion.” Deconversion implies leaving the tradition, whereas decommitment marks a continuum of movement away from the tradition that may ultimately, but not necessarily, lead to deconversion.

associated with a Jewish organization reject Christianity. These findings match the previous research, though not the research on millennial interfaith Jews. Given the limited nature of our research, it is hard to conclude decisively that being raised by interfaith parents leads to a decline in religiosity, though our results seem to suggest it.

Perhaps our data reveals a selection bias. Since our partner organization identifies solely as Jewish, its database contains only those people who actively identify with the organization or whose parents (one or both) identify with the organization. Missing from our sample are individuals who were raised by interfaith or Jewish-only parents and rejected Judaism, or individuals who no longer have any association with our Jewish partner organization. By the nature of our respondent collection, our data is biased. Moreover, elective participation in an online survey likely introduces bias into our data. Some respondents felt strongly (both positively and negatively) about Judaism and their Jewish upbringing; such strength may reflect increased willingness to answer an elective survey and thus skew the data. Of the twenty-four respondents, only seventeen elected to receive compensation; we have no way to link responses to individuals who received compensation (names and mailing addresses were collective via a second, data-isolated survey), so we do not know how strength of feeling correlated (if at all) to desire to receive compensation. Given the low response rate and the low overall numbers, there is quite a bit of room to misinterpret the data and make incorrect broad generalizations. In the data analysis below, I will attempt to correct for this as much as possible, drawing generalizations only when the data is overwhelming, and comparing our data to other research on occasion. The most interesting parts of our research come from individual responses that make up our case studies – in these instances, we data-captured a variety of individuals who present intriguing possibilities.

What, Then, Does the Data Reveal?

Our data, however limited, yielded some intriguing incongruities. As expected, both sets of respondents (those raised by Jewish-only and interfaith parents) agreed that Judaism is a religion; there were no outliers to this question. And essentially the same ratio in each group (4 to 1 for individuals with Jewish-only parents and 3 to 1 for individuals with interfaith parents) *strongly agree* that Judaism is a religion. Nearly 4 out of 5 respondents agreed that Judaism is a cultural group, though there was some uncertainty mostly concentrated among the respondents with Jewish-only parents. There was even more uncertainty when asked whether Judaism is an ethnicity, though the trends indicate that the respondents with interfaith parents were more willing to view Judaism as an ethnicity, whereas the respondents with Jewish-only parents were divided equally between agreement, disagreement, and uncertainty. One of the final questions was designed as a red herring to test respondents' knowledge about Judaism and Jewish history. We asked them if they strongly agreed, agreed, were unsure, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement "Judaism is a race." The results surprised us.

Overwhelmingly, though not completely, the respondents with Jewish-only parents rejected the statement that Judaism is a race. Two such respondents were unsure, and only one agreed that Judaism is a race. Respondents with interfaith parents were almost equally divided between disagreement (3 respondents), agreement (3 respondents), and uncertainty (2 respondents). These respondents were more inclined to call Judaism a "race," whereas

respondents with Jewish-only parents were almost uniformly opposed to this label. This discrepancy may indicate that the latter set of respondents are more aware of the historical concerns of labeling Judaism as a “race.” None of the respondents with interfaith parents, moreover, strongly disagreed with the statement that Judaism is a race, whereas fully one-third of the respondents with Jewish-only parents strongly disagreed.

In addition to less clarity about the nature of Judaism, respondents with interfaith parents tend toward less overt religious expressions, as demonstrated by responses to questions on beliefs and practices. The responses seem to indicate that they view themselves as more “culturally” Jewish instead of religiously Jewish, whereas respondents with Jewish-only parents see themselves more as a combined religiously and culturally Jewish. In other words, the respondents with interfaith-parents either tend to move away from the religious identity of Judaism or were not raised with a strong Jewish religious identity. Additionally, it appears that respondents raised with interfaith parents are more likely to be uninterested in religion overall. They are less open to exploring other religions than their counterparts raised in Jewish-only households, though the groups are equal in generally viewing religion as holding some importance in their lives.

This data results in an odd juxtaposition: even the respondents with interfaith parents who hold a lower view of religion, including Judaism, and see themselves as only culturally Jewish report that “religion” as a category is important in their lives. Despite their present religious status, however, all but one respondent answered that many or all religions are valid ways of life (with the outlier, a respondent with interfaith parents, saying that no religions are valid ways of life). While the respondents with interfaith parents tend to demonstrate a decline in religious self-identification, they are happy to ascribe validity to religion for other people. Two-thirds of these respondents, even though they have jettisoned their Christian identity, still attend church on occasion.

Our research on identity and conceptions, though limited, demonstrated three general trends: 1) respondents with interfaith parents identified themselves as less religiously affiliated than their counterparts with Jewish-only parents (a trend toward declined overt religiosity); 2) respondents with interfaith parents identify the categories of “Jewish” and “Judaism” in ways inconsistent with Reform Jewish understanding; and 3) the majority of both groups, even when lacking a current affiliation, reported religion (as a category) to be important in their lives. Based on those trends, an examination of trends in beliefs and practices, and the feelings that those beliefs and practices tend to engender in the two groups, yields further general conclusions.

Regarding beliefs, even though the respondents with interfaith parents self-identified as less religious, they were more willing (by a ratio of 2 to 1) than their counterparts with Jewish-only parents to use religious teachings to guide their lives and decision-making processes. Since respondents with interfaith parents rarely attend church and are less likely to attend temple than the respondents with only Jewish parents, and since they demonstrate declining markers of religiosity, it is hard to understand why they are more open to religion serving as a personal moral guide. Respondents with interfaith parents are also slightly more interested in increasing the amount that religion influences their decisions making.

Most respondents believe in the existence of something they would term “God” or “a higher spiritual being” (both groups over 60%). This figure is close to the statistics from the Pew Research Center’s 2014 study, in which 37% of Jewish respondents were absolutely certain about the existence of God and 27% were fairly certain (2015b: 48). In our results the respondents with Jewish-only parents, while believing in a higher *being* at the same rate as respondents with interfaith parents, were less certain about the nature of that being and were more willing to ascribe some level of personhood to the being. Respondents with interfaith parents, on the other hand, tended to view “God” as an impersonal force. Both groups were unsure about the existence or nature of an afterlife, with the majority in each group answering “Do not know” and roughly equal numbers answering somewhere on the agree or disagree sides for four out of the five questions about an afterlife. The only answer for which there appeared to be more certainty is on reincarnation, on which the “uncertain” group was essentially matched by the “disagree” group – this shift might indicate a perceived lack of syncretism between Judaism and some other religious traditions among our respondents (e.g., the “JuBu” movement popularized by Rodger Kamenetz; while not all Jewish-Buddhists believe in reincarnation, this belief in someone who identifies as Jewish is generally a marker of JuBu syncretism).

There is also a lack of clarity among the two groups on the nature of Jewish religious texts. While neither group reads the Tanakh regularly or in full, a statistic that matches the Pew Research Center’s data of only 17% of Jews reading religious texts (2015b: 80), both groups are willing to call the Tanakh “the word of God” to at least some extent. In fact, an almost equal number of respondents were willing to call the Tanakh “the word of God” in whole or in part as were willing to say that the Tanakh is *not* the word of God and is written by humans. This belief marks a higher rate than found in the Pew Research Center’s data, in which 37% responded that the Tanakh is the word of God (2015b: 57), though this discrepancy may reflect more our small sample size than any variation from the Pew Research Center. Most respondents in both groups indicated that the Tanakh either should not be taken literally or should be taken literally only in part. This data corresponds roughly to the Pew Research Center’s data, though we took a different approach to asking the question (2015b: 58).

The two groups differed in how they approached the Christian Bible, and the difference did not skew as assumed. All the respondents with interfaith parents identified the Christian Bible as “written by humans and not the word of God”; these respondents overwhelmingly do not believe that the Christian Bible is the word of God in higher percentages than they reject the Tanakh as the word of God. This belief provides further evidence that they have distanced themselves from any Christian religious identity. Half of the respondents with Jewish-only parents, however, were unsure about the nature of Christian texts or were willing to ascribe the identifier “word of God” in part. It also seems that these respondents are more willing to take the Christian Bible literally, at least in part; though from our research it is unclear what they might mean by “take literally.” These data points seem to indicate that they may have less understanding of Christianity and its texts than their counterparts with interfaith parents.

In other markers of practice, 80% of all respondents attend one or more High Holy Day services, and 13% marked the High Holy Days privately; only one respondent, with Jewish-only parents, does not celebrate or mark the High Holy Days. The respondents

overwhelmingly do not practice Easter, though an equal number of respondents from each group (three each) say that they practice Easter privately (five total) or publicly by attending church (one respondent with interfaith parents). It is unclear what a “private Easter” means to them, though our assumption is that it involves chocolate, dyed eggs, and baskets more than anything religious. The two groups reject the practice of prayer in equal proportions, though the respondents with interfaith parents who pray seem to do so more frequently than the respondents with Jewish-only parents who pray. It appears that respondents with interfaith parents are more likely to celebrate Shabbat at home than their counterparts. Perhaps, though, this is because temple attendance on a monthly or more frequent basis is higher among respondents with Jewish-only parents, and respondents with interfaith parents seem less inclined to attend a temple service. Both groups overwhelmingly celebrate Passover, and most respondents with interfaith parents celebrate Christmas (though, perhaps reflecting blended families and step-parents, even some respondents with Jewish-only parents celebrate Christmas). Neither group keeps kosher, not surprising for individuals who identified as belonging to a Reform temple, though two respondents with interfaith parents say that they keep kosher “sometimes,” indicating a more flexible view of the category. Perhaps the respondents confused actual *kashrut* with the kosher-style of some establishments which observe dietary suggestions (no pork or shellfish, no mixing dairy and meat) without strictly following *kashrut*.

Regarding beliefs and practices, we note the following trends: 1) while identifying as less overtly religious and sometimes holding different beliefs, many respondents with interfaith parents still perform public religious commitments; 2) the difference in beliefs between the two groups shows a clear lack of specifically Christian ideas filtering into the group with interfaith parents; and 3) there is sometimes a difference between self-reported religiosity and markers of religious expression. This last trend is not particularly surprising. Many people self-report beliefs and practices that are not in keeping with the general expectations of their religious self-identification. In other words, some people claim to be less religious but maintain the belief and practice markers of religiosity, while others claim to be religious without any of the overt trappings. In some cases, we can flag this as a sign of internal confusion over religious commitments, and our survey revealed some lack of consistency within the individual respondents. Despite these trends, most people were at least somewhat happy and fulfilled personally or spiritually.

We asked respondents how often they felt “a sense of personal or spiritual happiness and satisfaction.” Based on their responses, we divided them into groups designated “generally happy” (daily or weekly feelings of happiness and satisfaction), “somewhat happy” (feeling happy and satisfied at least monthly, though not more than that), and “generally unhappy” (feelings of happiness and satisfaction several times a year, only rarely, or never). Approximately 80% of the “generally happy” respondents had Jewish-only parents. Two-thirds of the “somewhat happy” respondents had interfaith parents. Over three-quarters of the respondents fell into the “generally happy” and “somewhat happy” categories. The remaining respondents, the “generally unhappy” group, had Jewish-only parents in 80% of the cases. While respondents with interfaith parents were less likely to identify as overtly religious, this identification did not lead to unhappiness, though they were overall less happy and satisfied than respondents with Jewish-only parents. Even though 80% of generally happy and

generally unhappy were respondents with Jewish-only parents, the ratio of happy to unhappy respondents with Jewish-only parents was 2 to 1. While respondents with interfaith parents were more likely to be only moderately happy, respondents with Jewish-only parents were more likely to be generally happy or generally unhappy, though with a higher ratio of happiness to unhappiness. Given the small sample size and the number of other factors at play, we cannot link happiness or unhappiness to any specific religious upbringing. We note, however, that our research suggests that unhappiness and dissatisfaction are not linked to being raised with interfaith parents, which we might assume given that those children see more parental disharmony on religious issues than children raised in single-faith families (Pew Research Center 2016: 34).

The larger conclusions suggested by our study and the interesting trends in the data do not present the fullest picture of children raised in Midwestern American families with interfaith parents. While some of the trends resemble earlier studies, they diverge from the most recent large-scale research. Moreover, the small scale of our study (just 8% of a pool of 300 potential respondents) does not provide enough variety to draw definitive conclusions. Therefore, instead of focusing solely on quantitative conclusions, we decided to explore some qualitative observations – case studies of the individuals who responded to our study. These are data-captured moments in the lives of people either raised with interfaith parents or raised with Jewish-only parents. We have selected five of the most interesting cases to present here, and we will draw some initial conclusions about each and about the whole. To maintain anonymity as much as possible, per our partner's request, the genders of the respondents are randomly assigned, and we have grouped them into two age ranges: 14-20 and 18-24. Individuals aged 18-20 are randomly placed in one of the two categories; these groupings allow us to give basic demographic information without revealing details that might unmask specific respondents.

Case Study A: Hidden Questioning

The first case study is a respondent 18-24 raised with two Jewish parents, but who seems to be decommitting from Judaism and is unsure if she is currently Christian. This person says that she is currently Jewish religiously, but is also unsure about her current religion. She says that she still practices the religion of her upbringing, which she identifies as Judaism, but says “No” when asked if she thinks of herself as Jewish even though there was an option to identify as culturally Jewish. When asked if she thinks of herself as Christian, she marked “Unsure”; to the open-response prompt “If asked publicly what religion you are, what would you say? Does this change depending on who you talk to?” this individual replied: “I would reply that I am still deciding. I was raised in a semi-jewish [sic] household but am now considering other religions. This answer changes if i [sic] am talking to my family.” While clearly considering her religious commitments, she also indicates that religion is unimportant in her life. The respondent belongs to both a temple and a church (which she designates as “Other”), and attends each a few times a year, though not the temple for the High Holy Days. She practices Easter privately, no longer celebrates Shabbat, still celebrates Passover (though she is unsure if she will in the future), and currently celebrates Christmas. Other markers of belief indicate uncertainty, and other markers of private religious practice indicate some personal religiosity (she reads scripture and prays). When asked about personal or spiritual happiness and

satisfaction, this person responded that she feels happy and satisfied only rarely (“generally unhappy”).

We have no identifiable motives for the person’s decommitment from Judaism, especially since she says that all religions are valid ways of life and that religion is unimportant in her life. Her response that she was raised “semi-Jewish” is intriguing given the presence of two Jewish parents, and that there were no other religious commitments in her upbringing. That she practices some Christian rituals privately and that she changes her “still deciding” answer when speaking to family likely indicates that this person’s family is not involved in her decision to decommit from Judaism.

If this a simple decommitment from Judaism, in which she is “still deciding” but outwardly practices Judaism sometimes, then this individual represents the move from religious to non-religious. The move to non-religiosity is a common trend among Christians, which is declining in the U.S., but does not seem to apply to Judaism, which is roughly stable in the U.S. (Pew Research Center 2015a: 28, 30). This individual, however, may be moving into Christianity, as represented by her uncertainty about holding a Christian self-conception (though definitively rejecting a Jewish self-conception), and the presence of Christian public and private celebrations even though she has two Jewish parents and was raised with only Judaism. This person is uncomfortable at temple and church and says that religion is unimportant. Unfortunately, given the data, there are more questions than answers. Clearly, however, this respondent is considering decommitting from Judaism and has Christian tendencies not explained by parental religious commitments. Whether this is simply a moment or represents a decisive shift, we cannot tell.

We learn from this case study that being reared by Jewish-only parents in a Jewish-only environment does not necessarily mean that individuals will remain with the tradition. Indeed, this individual seems to be gravitating away from the religion of her upbringing and toward Christianity. So being raised in an interfaith family is not the only path to decommitment from Judaism and the development of Christian religiosity.

Case Study B: Zealously Practicing

Another case study represents the opposite end, a 14-20 year-old respondent raised with both Catholicism and Judaism who does not identify with Christianity and is zealous in practicing Judaism. Both parents are Jewish, so the Catholicism must come in through another individual (family or friend) or through an educational setting. This person identifies as religiously and culturally Jewish, holds religion as important in her life, and is not open to exploring any other religions. This respondent says that Tanakh is “the word of God,” and also strongly agrees that Judaism is a religion, cultural group, ethnicity, and race. She prays privately every day, frequently attends temple, celebrates the Jewish holy days, reads scripture multiple times a week, celebrates Shabbat at home every week, and sometimes keeps kosher. Some of these markers are surprising in a Reform Jew and are more likely in practitioners of Christianity. However this person came to practice Judaism in this way, she is clearly overt about it in ways that put her private practice well outside the norm for Reform Jews. Clearly this person cannot properly identify the category “Judaism” (e.g., agreeing that Judaism is a race), reflecting a lack of knowledge about the tradition that she practices so closely. Unlike the previous case study, this respondent is somewhat happy.

Another possibility is that this respondent did not accurately fill out the survey, and instead simply gave random answers or tried to give nonsensical answers. Answers to the open-ended questions do little to clarify the respondent's apparent confusion. When asked how else she would label Judaism, the respondent answered, "Food, clothes." To the question what else Judaism means to her, she answered, "My heritage." These responses could either be sarcastic, or they could reflect the succinct beliefs of a very pious practitioner of Judaism. The description of Judaism as her "heritage" suggests that she was answering at least most of the questions seriously, and her identification with Judaism is serious and important to her self-conception and daily operation.

If she is indeed pious, her understanding of the nature of Judaism and about usual understandings in Reform Judaism (e.g., the nature of Tanakh) is intriguing. How did she come to these misapprehensions regarding Judaism? Why the strength of practice? Unfortunately, these questions are impossible to answer from the data received. Since she was raised primarily with Judaism and two Jewish parents, belongs to a Reform temple, and was in our partner organization's database, she likely had some measure of religious education. If the respondent seriously answered the questions about Judaism being a religion, cultural group, ethnicity, and race, then she clearly does not understand either the historical implications of those ideas or that Judaism is not a race.

The markers of what it means to be "Jewish" in the Reform tradition do not map onto this respondent's answers. If she answered honestly, she is rejecting the Catholic influence in her upbringing, but does not fully understand the contours of Reform Judaism. The cause of this discrepancy is unclear, especially since she almost certainly received at least some Jewish religious education. Such education generally includes modules that would have mitigated these discrepancies. We learn from this case study that being raised with two traditions does not necessarily mean that the individual will decommit from Judaism; though in this case, having two Jewish parents may be the mitigating factor.

Case Study C: Interfaith Agnostic

The third case study is of a respondent raised both Jewish and Protestant, aged 18-24, with one Jewish parent, who has completely rejected religion. This individual currently identifies as agnostic and seems to have a clear understanding of what this means, marking "Do not know" as the answer to belief questions about a divine being. He actively identifies as no longer practicing the religion of his upbringing, and for him religion is very unimportant. This individual feels uncomfortable in religious places (church or temple), never attends temple or church (but is still a member of a Reform temple), and is never personally or spiritually happy or satisfied. Despite membership at a Reform temple, the respondent does not identify as even culturally Jewish. Nonetheless, he still privately marks the High Holy Days and celebrates Passover (though he is unsure if he will continue this in the future), but he does not celebrate Christmas or Easter, and is possibly open to exploring other religions.

While rejecting Judaism as a religion, and while not identifying as Jewish, this person maintains some public Jewish rituals. When asked about Judaism as a religion, ethnicity, and race, this respondent agreed with all three; he strongly agreed that Judaism is a cultural group. When asked the open-ended question, "Is there anything else you would use to label 'Judaism?'" he responded, "A social group." The final question was open-ended and asked

“What does Judaism mean to you (if anything else)?” This respondent wrote, “Judaism is the least serious religion in a sense. Most of the people at my synagogue probably don’t even believe in God as traditionally construed. Judaism, at least in my experience as a reform [sic] Jew, is more purely social and cultural than every other religion I have witnessed.” Fascinatingly, this respondent conflates a kind of traditional belief in God as being Jewish religiously, instead of following an orthopraxic approach to Judaism (Prothero: 243-78). Religion, according to this respondent, is the sum of one’s beliefs, not the practices or ethics that other respondents emphasize in Judaism. In this way, the individual in this case study more closely follows a Christian definition of religion, perhaps reflecting the Christianity’s influence through either the Protestant parent or broader Christian American society.

This case study sums up the fears of the “silent Holocaust” among children of interfaith parents: attrition through lack of belief or practice, and the reduction of Judaism to “a social group.” This respondent has clearly considered his commitments and is generally consistent in his agnosticism. His beliefs and lack of interest in religion (marked by religion being unimportant in his life) trend to the agnostic. Whether this agnosticism is the result of interfaith upbringing, however, is open to interpretation.

Case Study D: “Turned Off” Interfaith

Our fourth case study is of a respondent aged 18-24 with two Jewish parents. This individual was raised with Judaism *and* two forms of Christianity, possibly reflecting a blended family with two step parents. Although he identifies as agnostic (not Jewish) when asked about his current religious affiliation, he also claims to still practice the religion with which he was raised, and he identifies Judaism as the religion emphasized in his upbringing. Even though this person claims agnosticism, he believes in God or a higher spiritual being, and thinks that this being is an impersonal force. When asked if he thinks of himself as Jewish, he responds “Unsure”; when asked the same question about Christianity, he says “No.” This person is open to exploring other religions, even though religion is neither important nor unimportant to him, and he views all religions as equally valid ways of life.

Being in a temple or church makes this person neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, though he is “seldom” in either church or temple (even though he identifies as having a Reform temple but no church). He attends temple on High Holy Day services and church on Easter and refused to answer all the questions on private religious practices (to an early question he answered that he felt a little more relaxed when praying, though the question did not differentiate between public liturgical prayer and private prayer). While agreeing that Judaism is a religion and a cultural group, he was unsure about Judaism as an ethnicity or race. This person falls into the “somewhat happy” category of people who feel personal or spiritual happiness and satisfaction at least monthly.

This person’s responses to the open-ended questions are intriguing. When asked, “If asked publicly what religion you are, what would you say? Does this change depending on who you talk to?” he wrote, “Changes depending on who I talk to.” To the final question on what Judaism means to the respondent, he answered: “Jewish people are too often self-important and annoying which turned me off to Judaism.” This respondent may highlight the risks of interfaith upbringing, which leads to more known familial strife regarding religion than single-faith families (Pew Research Center 2016: 34). This strife may be behind the answer to the

open-ended response. What we learn from this case study is that interfaith upbringing does not necessarily mean that individuals will embrace Christianity; however, it may mean that they leave religion altogether.

Case Study E: “Unitarian – sometimes I say ‘Jew’atarian”

Our final case study presented here is a respondent aged 14-20 raised in a household where the religion was “Other” but who has one Jewish parent; this is the only respondent not to identify as being raised Jewish, and as an outlier he was not included in the general conclusions above. This individual currently identifies as a “spiritual, but not religious” person who is culturally Jewish and who claims publicly to be a Unitarian, sometimes using the portmanteau “‘Jew’atarian.”

This person is open to exploring other religions, and religion is important to them. Prayer and religious attendance make this individual a little more relaxed, though he attends the services of both institutions only a few times a year, and he feels happiness or satisfaction at least monthly. He strongly believes in the existence of God or a higher spiritual being, which he identifies as a person. He believes strongly in an afterlife and believes that the Tanakh is “the word of God” and that it should be “taken literally in part, but not in its entirety,” and he sometimes makes his decisions or guides his daily actions based on religious teachings (but he would like to base his decisions on religious teachings more frequently). This person prays and meditates occasionally, currently celebrates Christmas (and will continue to do so in the future) and Easter (privately), never marks the High Holy Days, never celebrates Shabbat at home, and does not celebrate Passover but would like to in the future. He strongly agrees that Judaism is a religion, a cultural group, and an ethnicity; he disagrees that Judaism is a race.

Some of these answers (belief in a personal divine being, strong belief in an afterlife, believing in the punishment of wrongdoers in the afterlife) are generally not associated with Unitarianism, and are more frequently associated with conservative expressions within Christian traditions. They are also not traditionally associated with Reform Jews, and this respondent (while not claiming Judaism) belongs to a Reform temple.

These answers suggest that belonging to a temple does not require identification with the religion itself. Simple parental association is enough to claim membership. Since this person was not raised with Judaism as a religion, it is unclear whether he received any Jewish religious education (though his association with the partner organization may mean that he did). He may be the ultimate example of the “silent Holocaust,” in which a Jewish parent allows intermarriage or lack of personal commitments to the tradition to minimize their children’s Jewish upbringing, as earlier research suggested.

Other Case Studies

There are many more case studies we could have examined. For example, there is the respondent with two Jewish parents who identifies as only culturally Jewish, says that religion is neither important nor unimportant to them, yet writes, “I think it’s important for me to identify as Jewish, because I want to keep the Jewish religion alive.” To what extent will this person continue in the religion in the future if it remains only a cultural commitment to keep a tradition “alive” (with the undercurrent being “Judaism is in danger of dying”)? Will this person continue on this rather non-committal path? Will this person strengthen their

commitment? Will this person leave entirely? What will happen to any potential children? If they decommit from the tradition, then research suggests that it is unlikely that they will raise their own children with Judaism (Pew Research Center 2016: 23).

There are the multiple respondents who identify strongly with Judaism as an ethical path and were raised only with Judaism (despite, in some cases, having only one Jewish parent) – except some of them identify as only culturally Jewish and not religiously (or both culturally and religiously) Jewish. Understanding Judaism as ethical halakha seems to mitigate any tendency to decommit due to single-parent Jewish upbringing and may reflect a better way forward for interfaith (or single-Jewish parent) parents than other ways of teaching Judaism. This trend suggests an interesting area of research, but our results do not present enough information to pursue this line from our existing dataset.

Another possible case study is the self-identified Jewish (culturally) atheist who says, “Judaism was a formative presence in my younger years that has ceased to be as overtly meaningful”; this individual was reared in an interfaith household that emphasized Judaism and still maintains some of the festivals of both Judaism and Christianity. This person represents another way to understand decommitment, that there were strong religious commitments in childhood that disappeared as the subject approached adulthood. Like the agnostic examples above, it is unclear whether interfaith upbringing necessarily led to this respondent’s minimization (though not elimination) of Judaism. And this category (culturally Jewish, still keeping some of the celebrations, belonging to a temple, not religiously committed and so atheist or agnostic) may represent a growing category in Judaism, where belief or religiosity are not necessary conditions to belonging.

Limitations to the Survey and Data

Beside the limitations already outlined, the small scope of our survey did not allow us to ask questions about the respondents’ religious education (some research ties increased Jewish education to decreased intermarriage [Fishman and Goldstein: 11]), their participation in b’nai mitzvah ceremonies, or gain more details about the religious composition of their families, including step parents. Partnering with a Jewish organization naturally skewed our results, such that all respondents identified as having a Jewish temple whether they were religious or not. Our research, therefore, did not capture those who have fully separated from the Jewish organizations of their upbringing. Even if the ties remain merely familial, they represent a connection to the community of Jewish religious practitioners and people who identify as culturally Jewish. Moreover, our partner organization is affiliated with the Reform branch of Judaism, meaning that some of our data on beliefs and practices are not representative of the whole of Judaism.

There is a special risk of bias inherent in voluntary online surveys. Respondents had only three motivations to complete the surveys: desire for the compensation, familial pressure, and desire to express their positions. The familial pressure originates in the method of distribution by our partner organization. While their records provided the pool of respondents that fit our criteria, the only contact information was for these individuals’ *parents* – parents received an email, then decided if they wished to pass the email along to their children (including adult children) who matched the age criteria. (This method allowed us to pass a key IRB requirement for conducting research that included minors.) If parents, for whatever reason, desired their

children (minor or adult) to participate, they would be able to exert pressure that could bias the results. More importantly, bias could be introduced by the fact that some people clearly wanted to express their views on Judaism, both constructive and derogatory. Strength of feeling (positive or negative) about a subject motivates participation in a survey on that subject, so we may have captured a disproportionate number of people who felt strongly about Judaism. We also may have lost a significant number of respondents due to parents being too busy, forgetting, or simply being indifferent to the study.

Finally, our survey is limited given the age range of our research question. Since individuals aged fourteen to twenty-four are generally in a state of flux (they face biological, educational, life circumstance, and monetary changes, to name a few), we do not capture them as their “settled” selves. Instead we capture them at a particular developmental moment, which may bias our results. The study on millennial Jewish-interfaith children suggests that Jewish educational experiences in college years yields increased Jewish identification (Sasson et al., 2015a: 51), so our pre- or early college respondents may change drastically by the time they complete college. Moreover, some respondents who have left religion or whose Jewish identity is less secure may find themselves returning to their raised religion later in life – after children, or after the death of parents. Current commitments do not necessarily indicate trend lines or patterns of future behavior. Instead, what we have captured are a series of portraits frozen in time as people consider their past and present, looking ahead to how they *think* they want to construct themselves in the future. The motivations for answering the survey may bias the larger data, but the vignettes themselves (if we take them even partly at face value) suggest people and lives that are just as interesting as large numerical patterns.

Conclusion

While intriguing, the general conclusions of our survey are not truly conclusive. They suggest that earlier research on upbringing with interfaith parents was correct and can decrease religiosity and lead to declining views of Judaism. While clearly numerically insufficient, the responses point to possibilities for how this declining religiosity may take place. Understandings of what constitutes Judaism, and basic beliefs and understandings of how Judaism works, differ between the two groups of respondents (those raised with interfaith parents and those raised with Jewish-only parents, even if only one parent identified as Jewish). Perhaps this discrepancy is the result of bias introduced by low response rates. Regardless, even if only suggestive of the underlying issues, our data suggests possibilities for understanding decreased religiosity in children of interfaith families. Our case studies add texture to this data.

It appears that there are three categories among the respondents, both those examined in more detail and those mentioned only generally: those committed to Judaism fully, those partially committed to Judaism as a religion or cultural group, and those who no longer follow Jewish orthopraxy and may be decommitting from even a Jewish identity. The last group creates the fears that drive ideas like the “silent Holocaust,” and our data (along with earlier research) suggests that these fears are not unfounded. Some Jews are leaving Judaism; sometimes these are the children of interfaith parents, and sometimes these are the children of single-faith Jewish parents (though some of these are single-Jewish parent only). Our

research does not indicate one single reason why they are leaving, though it does appear that interfaith upbringing seems to foster the conditions necessary for religious decommitment.

However, single-faith children also decommit from Judaism, as demonstrated in the first case study. The middle category, those partially committed to Judaism, could go in either direction (increased or decreased commitment). With a lack of strong commitments to the religion or the cultural group, and with largely familial ties and senses of obligation keeping them committed, they may leave when those ties and obligations diminish past the point of holding sway over their actions. Individuals in this category are less likely to raise their children as overtly religious. Moreover, without a strong connection to their own religion, they are more likely to intermarry and thus less likely to raise their children to be Jewish (Pew Research Center 2016: 28-30).

The respondents who are fully committed to Judaism, according to our research, are more likely to come from single-faith Jewish families. While not necessarily causal, there is a correlation between interfaith parents and decreased religiosity. Contrary to our anecdotal evidence and our assumptions, this correlation holds true among the children of interfaith parents in the Midwest who were the subject of our research. While not all research supports this correlation, there is enough data to establish this trend. Given that the weight of trending data lies in the past, it is possible that the present, as demonstrated in the study on millennial-age Jewish children, finds this decline arrested. According to our limited study, that arrest may be slow to arrive in the Midwest.

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Appendix 1: Full Survey

The following is the survey instrument created for this study, which relies partly on the 2014 Religious Landscape Study (Pew Research Center); stripped are the required assent/consent questions and the age sorting question. Responses with the ▼ siglum indicate a drop-down menu, the values of which are listed individually or marked by a range with ellipses. Responses with the □ siglum indicate checkboxes that allow the respondent to make multiple selections. Responses with the ○ siglum indicate radio buttons that allow the respondents to select one answer only. Square brackets [] indicate an open-response text box.

Religious Sorting Questions

What is your present religion, if any? (Select all that apply)

- Jewish
- Catholic Christian
- Protestant Christian
- Other
- I am spiritual, but not religious
- None (I am nothing)
- I am an atheist
- I am agnostic
- I am unsure of my current religion

Were you raised in the same religion that you practice (or do not practice) currently?

- Yes
- No

In which traditions were you raised? (Select all that apply)

- Jewish
- Catholic Christian
- Protestant Christian
- Other
- I am spiritual, but not religious
- None (I was raised nothing)
- I was raised atheist
- I was raised agnostic
- I am unsure of my religious upbringing

If you were raised with multiple traditions, was one tradition emphasized more?

- Yes
- No

Which tradition was emphasized more than the others?⁴

- Jewish
- Catholic Christian
- Protestant Christian
- Other
- Non-religious spirituality

⁴ This question displayed only if they answered “Yes” to the previous question.

Do you think of yourself as Jewish?

- Yes, religiously
- Yes, culturally
- Yes, both religiously and culturally
- No
- Unsure

Do you think of yourself as Christian?

- Yes
- Yes, but only culturally
- No
- Unsure

Do you identify more with Judaism or Christianity?

- Judaism
- Christianity
- I identify with Judaism and Christianity equally

If asked publicly what religion you are, what would you say? Does this change depending on who you talk to?

[text box]

Sorting Questions

What is your sex?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Which of your parents are Jewish, if any?

- Mother
- Father
- Step-mother
- Step-father
- None of my parents are Jewish
- Prefer not to answer

Religious Sentiment Questions

Please answer the following questions based on how you feel about religion and/or its practice. You are not required to answer any of them to participate in the survey, but your answers are greatly appreciated and enhance the quality of our research study.

Are you open to exploring other religions?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- I don't know

How important is religion in your life?

- Very important
- Important
- Neither important nor unimportant

- Unimportant
- Very unimportant

Why is religion very important in your life?⁵

[text box]

Do you feel more relaxed/at ease when praying?

- Yes, much more relaxed
- Yes, a little more relaxed
- No, I'm neither more relaxed, nor less relaxed
- No, I feel uncomfortable
- I never pray

Do you feel more relaxed/at ease when attending temple or church?

- Yes, much more relaxed
- Yes, a little more relaxed
- No, I'm neither more relaxed, nor less relaxed
- No, I feel uncomfortable
- I never attend temple/church

Do you feel a sense of personal or spiritual happiness and satisfaction?

- Yes, at least daily
- Yes, at least once a week
- Yes, at least monthly
- Yes, several times a year
- Rarely
- Never

Religious Beliefs Questions

Please rate the following questions regarding your religious beliefs. You are not required to answer any of them to participate in the survey, but your answers are greatly appreciated and enhance the quality of our research study.

I believe in a God or higher spiritual being.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Do not know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I believe in an afterlife.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Do not know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I believe that good people will be rewarded in the afterlife.

- Strongly agree

⁵ This question displayed only if they answered "Very important" to the previous question.

- Agree
- Do not know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable

I believe that bad people will be punished in the afterlife.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Do not know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable

I believe that all people will be rewarded in the afterlife.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Do not know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable

I believe in reincarnation.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Do not know
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please answer the following questions with the answer that most closely matches your personal beliefs. You are not required to answer any of them to participate in the survey, but your answers are greatly appreciated and enhance the quality of our research study.

I believe that God or a higher spirit is . . .

- A person
- An impersonal force
- Both
- Neither
- I do not know

I believe that the Torah and the rest of the Hebrew Bible are . . .

- The word of God
- Written by humans and not the word of God
- A combination
- Do not know

I believe that the Christian Scriptures (including the New Testament) are . . .

- The word of God
- Written by humans and not the word of God
- A combination

- Do not know

I believe that the Torah and rest of the Hebrew Bible should be . . .

- Taken literally, word for word
- Taken literally in part, but not in its entirety
- Should not be taken literally
- Do not know

I believe that the Christian Scriptures (including the New Testament) should be . . .

- Taken literally, word for word
- Taken literally in part, but not in its entirety
- Should not be taken literally
- Do not know

I believe that . . .

- There is only one correct religious way of life
- There are many valid religious ways of life
- All religions are equally valid ways of life
- No religions are valid ways of life

Public Practices Questions

Please indicate the closest answer to each question. These questions are required to participate in the research study.

How often do you attend church?

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Once or twice a month
- A few times a year
- Seldom
- Never

How often do you attend temple?

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- Once or twice a month
- A few times a year
- Seldom
- Never

Are you a member of a temple or synagogue?

- Yes, a Reform temple
- Yes, a Conservative synagogue
- Yes, an Orthodox synagogue
- Yes, another kind of temple or synagogue
- No

Are you a member of a church?

- Yes, a Catholic church
- Yes, a Protestant church
- Yes, an Orthodox church

- Yes, another kind of church
- No

Do you celebrate the High Holy Days (Rosh Hashanah and/or Yom Kippur)?

- Yes, publicly (attending temple/synagogue for one or both holidays)
- Yes, privately
- No

Do you celebrate Easter?

- Yes, publicly (attending church for Easter)
- Yes, privately
- No

Private Practice Questions

For the following questions, select the answer that best represents your practices. You are not required to answer any of them to participate in the survey, but your answers are greatly appreciated and enhance the quality of our research study.

Apart from church or temple attendance, do you pray at home?

- No
- Yes, more than once a day
- Yes, daily
- Yes, several times weekly, but not every day
- Yes, about once a week
- Yes, a few times a month
- Yes, a few times a year

Apart from readings in temple or church, do you read sacred texts (Jewish and/or Christian scripture) or religious literature at home?

- No
- Yes, daily
- Yes, several times weekly, but not every day
- Yes, about once a week
- Yes, a few times a month
- Yes, a few times a year

If yes, do you read sacred texts, religious literature, or both?⁶

- Sacred texts (Jewish and/or Christian scripture)
- Religious literature
- Both

Do you meditate?

- No
- Yes, more than once a day
- Yes, daily
- Yes, several times weekly, but not every day
- Yes, about once a week

⁶ This question displayed only if they answered “Yes” to the previous question.

- Yes, a few times a month
- Yes, a few times a year

Do you celebrate Shabbat at home?

- Yes, every week
- Yes, more than once a month
- Yes, monthly
- Yes, a few times a year
- No, but I have in the past
- No, I have never celebrated Shabbat at home

Do you currently celebrate Christmas, and, if so, do you plan on continuing celebrating it in the future?

- Yes, I currently celebrate Christmas, and I plan on continuing to celebrate it in the future
- Yes, I currently celebrate Christmas, but I'm not sure if I will celebrate it in the future
- Yes, I currently celebrate Christmas, but I do not intend on continuing to celebrate it
- No, I do not currently celebrate Christmas, and I do not plan on starting to celebrate it
- No, I do not currently celebrate Christmas, but I want to in the future
- No, I do not currently celebrate Christmas, but I'm not sure if I will celebrate it in the future

Do you currently celebrate Passover, and, if so, do you plan on continuing celebrating it in the future?

- Yes, I currently celebrate Passover, and I plan on continuing to celebrate it in the future
- Yes, I currently celebrate Passover, but I'm not sure if I will celebrate it in the future
- Yes, I currently celebrate Passover, but I do not intend on continuing to celebrate it
- No, I do not currently celebrate Passover, and I do not plan on starting to celebrate it
- No, I do not currently celebrate Passover, but I want to in the future
- No, I do not currently celebrate Passover, but I'm not sure if I will celebrate it in the future

Do you fast for Jewish holy days?

- Yes
- No, I have never fasted
- No, I used to fast, but I don't anymore
- I decide anew each year

Do you keep kosher at home?

- Yes
- No, I have never kept kosher
- No, I do not currently keep kosher
- I keep kosher sometimes

Do you use religious teaching to help make decisions or guide your day-to-day actions?

- Yes, almost always
- Yes, sometimes
- Yes, sometimes, but I would like to more frequently
- Yes, but only rarely
- Yes, but only rarely, though I would like to more frequently
- No
- No, but I would like to

Conceptions of Judaism Questions

Please rate the following statements. These questions are required to participate in the research study.

Judaism is a religion.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Judaism is a cultural group.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Judaism is an ethnicity.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Judaism is a race.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Is there anything else you would use to label “Judaism”?

[text box]

What does Judaism mean to you (if anything else)?

[text box]