Sources of Altruistic Calling in Orthodox Jewish Communities: A Grounded Theory Ethnography

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SOURCES OF ALTRUISTIC CALLING IN ORTHODOX JEWISH COMMUNITIES: A GROUNDED THEORY ETHNOGRAPHY

by

Stephen J. Linenberger

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Doctor Degree of Philosophy

Major: Human Sciences
(Leadership Studies)

Under the Supervision of Dr. Daniel W. Wheeler

Lincoln, Nebraska
November, 2010
This study of altruistic calling the Orthodox Jewish community began with a line of inquiry, grounded in previous hypotheses and studies of factors that motivate altruism in the general population, including empathy, unintended consequences of altruism, altruistic role modeling, collectivism, and principlism. Counter to past research suggesting altruism is activated along an empathy-altruism path (Batson, et al., 2007) the findings of this study revealed a consistent low empathy response by participants when asked about their feelings about those in need. However, when asked to describe outcomes of helping situations, there was a consistent high empathetic joy response, indicating the helper and the helped both experience satisfaction and improved affect from such interactions.

A collectivism-altruism path appears to have been established by a strong sense of community, which is manifested in the notion that “everyone is responsible for everything”. In addition, the Jewish community acts as a sort of collective moral audience that reinforces kind acts and discourages selfish acts. Finally, both the empathy-altruism and collectivism-altruism paths seem to converge at the principlism-altruism path, in which altruism is ultimately activated by a desire to uphold a moral principle - in this case, the Three Pillars of Judaism: Torah (Study), Avodah (Service),
and Chesed (Kind Act). These principles seem to be engaged by a moral imagination and reinforced through continuous reflection and by taking account of one’s actions.

The study was conducted using a grounded theory ethnography methodology. The researcher collected data from various ethnographic sources such as Jewish community experiences, celebrations, observations, and semi-structured interviews and grounded finding in relevant theories of altruism and calling. Ethnographic data were triangulated through verification, member checking, and by constantly comparing findings to the extant literature on altruism and calling. The results are presented as a grounded theory model of altruistic calling in the Orthodox Jewish community. Implications for future research on servant leadership and other tangential concepts are offered.
DEDICATION

To Carolyn.

And in memory of my parents, Frank and Vera.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I was nearing the completion of my dissertation, I spent some time with a rabbi who was kind enough to visit with me about what it means to see the possibilities in the completion of an arduous task. During the course of our conversation he related the following story.

A long time ago, a Jewish clothing salesman and his wife left their little village in Europe and moved to the Lower East Side of Manhattan. The clothing salesmen dreamt of opening his own clothing store in his new neighborhood, so like any good businessman, his first step was to do his market research. He needed to find out what kind of clothing his future competition was selling, and how they were selling it. Over the course of one afternoon, he visited every clothing store in the neighborhood, taking note of what was selling and what was not. He noticed neckties were selling pretty well in each store, so he decided to open a store specializing in neckties.

The next day, he went around to the clothing stores with two other questions in mind; which stores are the busiest and what are they doing to attract customers? As the day went on, he was able to narrow his focus to the two busiest stores in his neighborhood. He had noticed that the two busiest stores had big signs in their windows. The clothing salesman did not speak English, so he took great care in writing down the letters from each sign. That night, his wife helped him make two large signs for his new specialty store. Very soon he was open for business. As customers approached his store on the first day of business, they were greeted with two big signs adorning the windows. One sign read, “GRAND OPENING” and the other sign read, “GOING OUT OF BUSINESS.”
The rabbi who told me this story said, “Just like the clothing salesman in this story, we often celebrate the ‘GRAND OPENING’ of a journey and then as the journey comes to an end, we declare we are ‘GOING OUT BUSINESS.’” Then we commence to ‘kvetch’ (complain, gripe) about how hard the journey was, saying ‘Glad that is over’, or ‘I would never do that again’’. However, as a Ph.D. student, I was very fortunate to encounter a few colleagues who reminded me that a dissertation should not be viewed as the end of one’s research but rather the beginning. Therefore, I am happy to say that this work represents what I hope will be the beginning of a long line of research.

Many people were instrumental in the development of this dissertation, both personally and professionally. I wish to thank the members of my committee for their support, guidance, and encouragement. Special thanks must be given to my advisor, Dr. Dan Wheeler, who met with me on many occasions to lend moral support and offer sage advice at every stage of this study. His patience and wisdom were greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank Dr. Jay Barbuto and Dr. Jim King for their scholarly input and encouragement. Dr. Mark Burbach deserves a big thank you for taking the time to provide scholarly advice and a thorough editorial review of the final draft. Other faculty members contributed to this dissertation by way of their expert instruction, including Dr. Douglas May and Dr. Cynthia Willis-Esqueda who each taught courses that inspired me and informed my understanding of the fields of organizational behavior and social-psychology, the foundations on which this study was built. Thanks to Dr. John Schmidt for assisting me as an unaffiliated observer during the interview process and beyond - he is a true friend and scholar.
This study would not have been possible without the vision and cooperation of Rabbi Pesach Lerner, who saw to it that my research was accepted and noticed in the Orthodox Jewish community. I will be forever indebted to him.

I wish to acknowledge every past and current student in the Young Israel Education Program for their interest in this project and their unwavering encouragement. Thanks also to the many Jewish friends and colleagues I encountered along the way. Each student, colleague, and friend motivated and inspired me on this journey.

Finally, I would like to thank my immediate and extended family. Your patience, encouragement, and support humble me. I could not have done this without you.
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Chapter I

Introduction

The topic of altruism presents a slippery slope. Philosophers have questioned its usefulness (Kant, 1785/1898). Psychologists cannot agree on its definition (Batson, et al. 2007). Others argue that altruism is an essential part of functional communities and societies (Oliner & Oliner, 1995). Despite the philosophical and economic debates that frame our understanding of altruism, an internal sense or “calling” to act altruistically is considered an essential part of leadership philosophies such as servant leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), stewardship (Block, 1993), and spiritual leadership (Fry 2003). Altruism can also be found in structured organizational settings in the form of altruistic organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006).

In popular culture, movies such as Pay It Forward (Leder, 2000) extol the virtues of helping our friend, neighbor, or stranger in an altruistic way thus providing a glimpse of a fictional context in which each kind act is not paid back, but paid forward to the next person. However, when the movie ends, many viewers are confronted with an awareness that we really do not live in a very altruistic society after all. It appears we live in an individualistic society that applauds individual achievement and marvels at the random acts of kindness that bubble up in the news. We seem to be humbled by celebrities who, out of the kindness of their heart, bestow gifts on adoring followers or provide support to awestruck benefactors. We tend to be inspired by celebrity and obsessed with power. The most popular programs on television are reality based shows that pit individual against individual or personality against personality in competitive social situations.
Furthermore, we work in organizational environments that reward individual effort and value unbridled ambition (Ket DeVries, 2003). As a result our workplaces are becoming more hostile and less civil. Acts of bullying in the workplace are on the rise, costing organizations millions of dollars each year in lawsuits and lost productivity (Mattice & Garman, 2010). And finally, we consume products that are marketed to us, based not on what is best for us, but what will make us feel better about ourselves (Reich, 2010). Ultimately, we have become a society that focuses less on helping others and focuses more on personal image and individual accomplishments.

However, social psychological research from the past six decades has consistently demonstrated that groups, organizations, and communities function better when members look out for one another by recognizing and anticipating ways to help their neighbor or coworker (Allport, 1985). Ironically, while we may not be a country of altruistic minded individuals, we tend to admire and are humbled by historical leaders such as Martin Luther King, Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, and others who could be considered “moral and caring exemplars” who exhibited great concern and responsibility for the well being of others, even in the face of great personal challenges (Walker & Frimer, 2007). Western civilization, with its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition, is shaped by the teachings and actions of biblical leaders such as Abraham, Moses, and David. These revered religious leaders share some common personal characteristics; they were all chosen to lead because of their generosity, kindness, wisdom, and humility. And while each one overcame hardships and had moments of doubt, these leaders all shared a sense of calling to serve others. In the Torah, which is made up of the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), Jewish patriarchs are depicted
as magnanimous in their dealing with others. For instance, Abraham’s tent was said to have had doorways on all four sides so that travelers approaching from the four points of the compass would know they were welcome. Moses was chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, not because of his stature, strength, or leadership skills, but because he was caring and attentive servant. Ultimately, these and many other Jewish patriarchs were driven by a sense of calling to help others grow and pursue a righteous life (Telushkin, 2009).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study is to develop a grounded theory of altruistic calling through an ethnographic study of the Orthodox Jewish Community. As a grounded theory study, it attempts to graphically depict altruistic calling as an aspect of Orthodox Jewish community in order to provide a possible explanation of how altruistic calling is taught, nurtured, and practiced in a given context. Altruistic calling is also studied in this research as parts of a broader leadership construct known as servant leadership. In a recent study of the components of servant leadership, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) identified altruistic calling as a foundational construct of Servant leadership. Altruism has been studied as a prosocial behavior, primarily in the field of social psychology (See Batson, et al., 1989), and calling has been examined in spiritual leadership research conducted by Fry (2007) and other researchers in the fields of religion and leadership. However, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) state that, “research is also needed on the hereditary and environmental nature of altruistic calling” (p. 26).
Background of Study

In the summer of 2004, the Dean of my academic department at Bellevue University (BU) in Nebraska came to me and asked if I would be interested in teaching in a new academic program. The Dean explained that a Rabbi from New York City (NYC) had contacted BU about the possibility of creating a Master’s in Leadership for students in the Orthodox Jewish Community. Intrigued, I told the Dean I was very interested and thanked him for the potential opportunity. Shortly after our conversation I was invited to a meeting to discuss this new graduate program with some key university administrators, a fellow faculty member, and Rabbi Pesach Lerner.

Rabbi Lerner was the first Orthodox Jew I had ever met. I was truly amazed by his confidence, professionalism, sense of humor and, above all, energizing spirit. He spoke with passion about the importance of education in the Jewish community as well as the academic ability of its students. I was excited about the prospect of teaching leadership in such a unique context, and as a person who had always admired the Jewish faith, I was very interested in the entire cultural experience. But little did I know this was only the beginning of a profound educational and personal experience.

Since that first meeting with Rabbi Lerner, I have journeyed to New York City 18 times over a span of five years and have interacted with the Orthodox Jewish community on every trip. Sixteen of these trips were “teaching trips” during which I taught four to five day graduate courses in various subjects related to leadership. Of the other two “non-teaching trips”, one was taken to attend the Bar Mitzvah of a boy who is the son of one of my former students and the second “non-teaching trip” was used to collect data from formal semi-structured interviews. During each trip, I spent some time talking to
Orthodox Jews about their religion, beliefs, families, community, and virtually any other
topic related to their way of life.

Over the course of the five years of interacting with the Jewish community, I
began to notice signs of prosocial behavior that went above and beyond what I had seen
or experienced before. At first it was little, somewhat normal things I noticed. Students
were always eager to help one another with classroom chores and always showed great
concerns for me while I was in NYC, always making sure to send kind wishes to my
family back in Omaha for “sharing” me with them for extended periods of time during
the year. Given that most of my students were in the teaching profession, we talked in
class about Jewish education and some of the activities occurring in Jewish schools.
During these discussions, I would invariably hear descriptions of volunteer activities and
school projects that children were involved with that focused on helping others in the
Jewish community.

Then I started hearing touching stories of moral acts of kindness and altruism
from Jewish biblical history, the Holocaust, and everyday life in the Jewish community.
I was also amazed to learn about the “gemachim”, organizations that exist to provide
completely free services and products to Jewish people in need. These gemachim ranged
from providing wedding supplies for a bride with few resources, to a gemach that
prepared food for Orthodox Jews who could not celebrate Shabbos due to illness or other
reasons, to a gemach that provided a “lock switching service” for those who have lost the
keys to their house. More institutionalized, professional organizations such as the all
volunteer, community based EMT service, Hatzolah provided wonderful examples of
volunteerisms and community support in a life and death context.
Soon, I found out that these kind acts and altruistically based organizations are part and parcel of the larger concept of “chesed”, or the lovingkindness, that represents one of the three pillars of the Jewish world (Bunim, 1964). This discovery of the concept of chesed produced a sort of reverse chain reaction in which I was thrust backward through a research stream I had been in for some time. This source of the stream was in the field of leadership studies where I was exposed to Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) and Barbuto and Wheeler’s (2006) constructs of Servant leadership which, include altruistic calling. From there the research stream branched off into other related disciplines and theories. The field of Organizational Behavior introduced me to Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Organ, Posdakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006) and Altruistic Organizational Behavior (AOCB). This stream led back to leadership studies vis-à-vis Spiritual Leadership where the topic of altruism really took root in my mind. As a result, I followed the altruism stream into Social Psychology where I learned about the work of Batson and colleagues (1973 - 2009) on prosocial motivation and altruism.

Figure 1 provides a chart that illustrates streams of research and fields that informed this study.

**Theoretical Base: Relevance of Servant Leadership**

The modern American workplace has changed drastically over the last several decades. Changes in the psychological contract between employer and employee have created less secure and less civil workplaces. Employers can no longer be counted on to look out for employees and employees can no longer be counted on to stay with an organization long-term simply out of sense of duty and commitment (Edward & Karau, 2007).
There are indications that the workplace is becoming less civil as well. Work related stresses, brought on by less caring and more demanding organizational contexts lead to anger, depression, and in some extreme cases, rage in the workplace. Work-life balance is harder to come by due to the ubiquitous nature of work; work is always as near as your cell phone or computer. Workers are spending more time working at home, potentially compromising familial relationships and limiting free time to gain some perspective on work life issues (Koys, 2001).

Recently, a plethora of struggles have besieged large scale organizations. Massive layoffs, ethical scandals, and a shrinking customer base are signals that organizations will need to do more to restore confidence in workers and customers. This in turn will require new business models and leadership models. These models will clearly need to be more employee-focused, ethical, and sustainable. If emotional exhaustion and low organizational commitment are outcomes of the present business and
management models, then the new models will also need to focus more on employee well-being and happiness. These outcomes can be accomplished by hiring and training leaders who are motivated to serve others first in fair, ethical, and people centered ways (Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008).

Servant leadership provides such a model. While researchers are still working towards ways to observe and measure the specific behaviors associated with servant leadership, practitioners from a variety of professions promote servant leadership as an ethical and holistic form of leadership. The competitive nature of the modern organization tends to belie espoused values of a people-centered environment in favor of perception of organizational constituents as either costs or benefits. This view is further compounded during times of economic uncertainty, especially when workers are afraid to stand up for their principles for fear of losing their job, and managers eschew prosocial behaviors in favor of managing others in purely transactional ways, motivated by a bottom line mentality (Reich, 2010). In these situations, helping others is often viewed as naïve whereas looking out for one’s self interest is viewed as a smart way to keep one’s job.

However, the demands of organizational life require leaders at all levels of an organization to effectively motivate others towards specific goals and objectives (Yukl, 2007). The methods and techniques used by leaders to motivate and guide followers are as varied as leaders themselves. Many leaders rely on the power of their position to maintain order and compliance among their followers, while other leaders may attempt to engage followers on a personal level in the hope that followers will perform at higher levels out of a sense of responsibility and respect for the leader (French & Raven, 1959).
On one hand, command and control leadership promotes order and stability and, on the other hand, follower-centered leadership engages followers in ways that transcend the structure and politics found in the typical organization.

Given the competitive environment of the modern organization, it would seem at first blush that the only possible way to succeed as a leader must necessarily involve rational, measured, and dispassionate interactions with friends and foes within the organization. Results count in organizations, therefore leaders must constantly be focused on managing scarce resources effectively and efficiently, with an eye on the bottom line at all times. However, many organizations spend a tremendous amount of time and money in pursuit of leader and leadership development. The typical development plan involves indentifying potential leaders or promoting leadership as an end goal within the organization. Put another way, organizations want their potential leaders to work on developing their own leadership skills, ostensibly to help the organization run more smoothly with lower incidence of conflict and higher levels of collaboration and cooperation, as opposed to promoting leader self-awareness as a ongoing process with potentially positive effects beyond the leader’s current position or context (Van Velsor & McCauly, 2004).

Some recent changes in demographics and social conditions may also affect the way leadership is conceptualized and practiced in the modern organization. Recent studies have pointed to the differences between older and younger generations’ views of management, leadership, and organizations in general (Salahuddin, 2010). For example, it has been found that workers from the Baby Boomer generation tend to favor clear direction from managers and tend to value predictability over creativity in the workplace.
In contrast, Generation X (Gen X) workers prefer to work in organizations where their creativity and innovative ideas are valued. Gen X workers also tend to be motivated by systems and processes that allow workers to have a life outside the organization. Finally, Gen X workers appear to be much more concerned with such values as social responsibility and corporate citizenship. Generational shifts in the workplace may very well usher in a new period in organizations where the “soul” of the organization becomes just as important as the “success” of the organization. Indeed, this new generation may create a paradigm shift in the way organizations are evaluated by employees and organizational performance is assessed in the marketplace (Macon & Artley, 2009).

The next generation of workers may be more inclined to value and appreciate the servant leader because the holistic decision processes and service orientation of the servant leader could help them establish trust and respect among younger workers (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Furthermore, servant leaders have been described as capable of managing the various paradoxes of decisions, which may foster organizational wisdom. Clearly, this form of leadership aligns more closely with the needs, wants, and desires of the emerging US workforce. Therefore, it is important to understand the specific mechanisms underlying the behaviors and motives of servant leaders in order to accurately describe and promote this form of leadership in the modern organization.

At its most basic level, servant leadership operates on a follower-centered moral principle that values the people who make up organizations or communities. Servant leadership operates under an assumption that an organization or community is a reality only because it is a place for people to work or function (Kiechel, 1992). Moreover, relationships built on trust and respect form a foundation on which the servant leader’s
influence is built. Servant leaders, as shown in many historical examples, are able and willing to accept the consequences of their decisions. Choosing to absorb pain (in differing degrees) instead of transferring it to others is the ultimate outcome of this leadership style (Sarkus, 1996). Finally, the servant leader develops power through natural ability, the willingness to serve others first and by being sensitive to those around him. Accordingly, the servant leader believes that those being served should be nurtured and cared for and, in doing so, the stability and effectiveness of organizations and communities will be increased (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

It could be said that servant leadership has suffered from an identity crisis in the field of leadership studies. Viewed by many scholars as a “leadership philosophy”, servant leadership has yet to be considered as a viable leadership theory due, in a large part, to the lack of empirical research supporting or validating its various constructs (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). While some work has been done on defining and testing the validity of the servant leadership constructs, the constructs themselves become problematic when investigating them beyond the individual level of analysis.

Specifically, servant leadership has been regarded as a spiritual leadership model and, as such, is focused on such virtues as service, ethics, humility, and trust (Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008). If servant leadership is to be taken seriously as a model for leaders in the modern organization, its various constructs should be studied and analyzed in such a way as to demonstrate their efficacy for leaders within competitive business, non-profit, educational, or human service organizations.
Research Question

What aspects of Jewish culture, religion, and worldview combine to create altruistic calling in members of the Orthodox Jewish community?

Overview of Leadership Research Methods

The field of leadership and its conceptual framework owes its origins to the fields of psychology, social psychology, and organizational behavior (Parry, 1998). Research traditions in all of these fields are rooted in experimental and quasi-experimental designs. These designs employ rigorous statistical analysis of data gathered through direct observation, tests, self-report measures, multi-rater questionnaires, and other similar instruments. This traditionally quantitative approach stems from the positivist paradigm in which objective, universal behaviors can be matched to individuals through rigorous statistical analysis. The positivist researcher employs deductive logic, an objective point of view, “naïve realism” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), and “knowledge [that] is based on natural phenomena and their properties and relations as verified by the empirical sciences” (“Positivism”, n.d.).

However, some researchers have begun to question the “significance of the significance” found in many experimental and other quantitative studies (see Starbuck, 2008). Many leadership and management studies have been conducted using convenient sample populations that often include undergraduate or graduate students in classes that are covering the very topics being researched. Study samples made up of participants with limited experience or background limits the external validity of such studies. The results become problematic when trying to generalize them to a more normally distributed and experiences workforce. In order to extend beyond the prevalent
quantitative based research found in leadership and management, new theories must be
developed and tested.

To accomplish the task of creating new methodologies in leadership studies, Parry
(1998) suggests researchers need to investigate how the social processes of leadership
takes place in specific settings. Therefore, the focus of leadership studies should be on
the process of leadership as opposed to studying leaders alone. Ultimately, the broader
social contexts in which leadership takes place must be examined to ensure as many
contextual variables and conditions are accounted for in the leadership process. This kind
of research calls for a more qualitative approach that may include case studies,
phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory.

Overview of Methodology

In order to understand the myriad aspects and manifestations of altruism, this
study used an ethnographic grounded theory approach to generate a theoretical model in
order to illustrate the ways in which specific cultural sources interact to promote altruism
and calling in the Orthodox Jewish community. According to Charmaz (2006) grounded
theory ethnographers find out what is going on in a setting and then create a conceptual
map of the processes and interactions occurring in the setting. For the purposes of this
study, the phenomenon being examined is altruistic calling; the context is the social
psychological and cultural processes that promote altruistic calling within the Orthodox
Jewish community.

Definition of Terms

*Altruism*—The term altruism has been credited to August Conte, who over 150
years ago conceived altruism as a devotion to the welfare of others, based in selflessness
(Compte, 1973). Accordingly, Durkheim (1951) felt that altruism is present in every society and reasoned that no society could exist without its members making sacrifices for others from time to time, and went on to claim that “altruism is not merely a sort of agreeable ornament to social life, but its fundamental basis” (p. 223). Moreover, the predominant definitions of altruism focus on selflessness as well as the motivation for the selfless act. Oliner and Oliner (1988) pointed out that the degree to which one acts out of selflessness and the source of motivation for the selfless act can vary to a large extent. In one instance an altruistic act may occur with no personal benefit in mind, and yet in another instance an altruistic act may benefit the self and the other. To confound things further, an altruistic act may not be committed with an external reward in mind, but the person committing the altruistic act may very well derive some intrinsic pleasure or internal trepidation from engaging in altruism. Intrinsic pleasure derived from “giving for the sake of giving” could lead to a positive unintended consequence of happiness, and trepidation may lead to a “no good deed will go unpunished” type of unintended consequence of altruism (Batson, 1991).

While the notion of acting in selfless ways, on behalf of others and beyond one’s own self interest, has been questioned by many philosophers, social researchers, economists and political scientists, it can be argued that an altruistic act often comes from “an other-oriented emotional response congruent with the perceived welfare of another person – today usually called empathy or sympathy” (Batson, 1987, p.36). This so called empathy-altruism response hypothesis posits that the emotions of empathy and altruism act together to produce motivation to help others for whom the empathy is felt. However, the motivation to help others based on empathy does not provide insight as to the
underlying goals in the mind of the helper. According to Batson (Batson, et al., 2007), “Increasing the other person’s welfare could be (a) an ultimate goal, producing self-benefits as unintended consequences; (b) an instrumental goal sought as a means to reach the ultimate goal of gaining one or more self-benefits; or (c) both. That is, the motivation could be altruistic, egoistic, or both” (p. 247).

*Calling*—In his seminal work on servant leadership, Greenleaf (1970) stated that leaders should, first and foremost, be motivated by a desire to serve others. The servant leader satisfies this motivation by listening and understanding, practicing acceptance and empathy, and focusing on being aware and perceptive of other’s needs, wants, and desires. The servant leader’s success or failure depends on the answers to the following questions, “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged of society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?”[Italics in original] (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 27).

For the purposes of this study, calling will be defined in two separate yet related contexts - Judaism and Servant leadership. In Judaic terms, calling can be defined as a sense of special purpose. Donin (1972) explained, “that purpose is not to make Jews of all the world, but to bring the peoples of the world, whatever their distinctive beliefs may be, to an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God and to an acceptance of the basic values revealed to us by that God” (p.12). To this end, Orthodox Jews also believe that they are to not only adhere to their deep moral and spiritual values, but also share these values with the rest of the world by leading an exemplar life. This Orthodox Jewish
definition falls in line with Fry’s (2003) general, secular definition of spiritual calling as making a difference and giving meaning to one’s life.

Orthodox Judaism—

“They are not so ready to confide these impressions to each other; it is too easy to give offense.”

– Herman Wouk

According to Faires and Hanflick (2005), Judaism in America is represented by three major ideologies: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. Central to all of these forms of Judaism is the notion that, “G-d is One, that a covenant exists between G-d and the Jewish people, and that the Torah [first five books of the Old Testament] is the primary text defining that covenant” (p. 39). Of the three Jewish ideologies, Orthodox Judaism represents the oldest and most observant. This means Orthodox Jews observe the Sabbath, participate in daily prayer and study, and also follow laws of daily life found in source texts such as Torah, Talmud, and Mishna. They also follow all laws related to kosher food preparation and consumption (keeping kosher). All these elements of Orthodox Judaism will be discussed in more depth in subsequent chapters.

While working on a plan to clearly define the differences between various Orthodox Jewish cultures and ideologies, I decided to pay a visit to a local rabbi for some advice. I sat with him for some time, trying to figure out the best way to graphically describe the various Jewish customs, traditions, and communities in a way that might be understandable to Jews and non-Jews alike. As part of the process, I started to draw a circular diagram with a small circle in the middle then a slightly bigger circle, surrounded by a slightly bigger circle, much like the rings in a cross-section of a tree trunk. I
suggested to the rabbi that I could place Ultra-Orthodox Judaism in the center of the
diagram and expand the diagram by adding various sects of Orthodox Judaism to each
ring as it worked its way out to the empty corners of the page, which represented the
secular Jewish and non-Jewish world.

As our conversation progressed, I began to realize that although I might have
stumbled on a simple way to explain a complex community, the diagram I was drawing
did not represent the myriad nuances and deep interconnectedness of the Jewish people.
My simple diagram would have to be made much more elaborate if it was to explain the
subtle differences between Jewish ideologies, cultures, and customs. For instance, while
Hassidic Jews are often associated with an Ultra-Orthodox form of Judaism, which limits
its contact with the non-Jewish world, the Hassidic Chabad-Labovitch community does
interact more openly with the non-Jewish world to the extent that they exist not just in
large urban Jewish enclaves, but in also in small communities scattered all around the
world. On the other hand, Modern Orthodox Jews observe a religious life, keep kosher,
observe Shabbos, live in close-knit neighborhood/communities but also interact with the
non-Jewish world and may even derive some deeper appreciation of the world through
appropriate secular fine art and entertainment.

Regardless of the differences between Orthodox Jewish cultures and ideologies,
to be an Orthodox Jew in the modern world is to live a committed life. Committed to,
powered by and focused on, family, study, and community (Jungreis, 1998). In each of
these realms, Orthodox Jews have clear rules and rituals that govern every aspect of their
life from the food they eat to the rituals involved in celebrating life-cycle events and
holidays.
Many researchers from the fields of history and social science have come to the conclusion that the Jewish people have survived for so long because of their unwavering devotion to Mosaic Law. The modern Jew still finds relevance in the laws and “web of habits of thought and conduct” (Wouk, 1987, p. 22) that occupy the daily life of a people who have survived for thousands of years, enduring countless well documented hardships and struggles.

Assumptions

The underlying assumption of this study was that there would be certain core values and principles related to altruism in the Orthodox Jewish community that could be indentified and understood using leadership and social-psychology paradigms. It was assumed that the members of the Jewish community I spoke to about this research all had the knowledge and experience to explain how these values and principles are taught and put into practice.

As noted earlier, this research study is rooted in the social constructivist paradigm which states that context provides for interpretive meaning and, further, that good sociological accounts point out the multiplicity of meanings and perspectives, and the rationality of these perspectives, within a context (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). In order to properly define and describe the context, the researcher becomes immersed in the community in which the context resides. As such, the researcher’s role is to interpret and ascribe meaning to their findings. Of course, these interpretations are influenced by the researcher’s own background and experiences.
**Delimitations and Limitations of the Study**

This study does have certain delimitations and limitations. Delimitations limit the generalizability of the findings. A delimitation of this study is the area of analysis is confined to a very specific population that is relatively insular and self sufficient. This means the study only reflects the processes occurring in this specific population. This study will not be able to address forms of altruistic motivation or calling in other Jewish communities. In fact, the majority of the participants in this study were from mainstream modern Orthodox and traditional Orthodox Jews from the Ashkenazi or European sects of Judaism. Middle Eastern or Sephardic Jews were represented in relatively small numbers in this study.

Limitations relate to the methodology used to conduct research. Limitation in this study includes unique, but limited access to the research population. Potential participants in this study had to be comfortable talking to someone from outside their community. Therefore, there were some clear limits on who would be accessible for this study. Another possible limitation is related to the topic of altruism itself. Participants and other members of the Jewish community were aware of the research I was conducting on altruism. This research even received some press coverage in the Orthodox Jewish community in the form of a magazine article and radio interview about this research project. Given that most participants knew about the topic of this research in advance, there was a risk of the subjects unwittingly providing information that would positively influence the results of the study.
Relevance of Research

This research is relevant in several potentially significant ways. First, this research extends beyond previous experimental research on altruism (See Batson, et al., 1989), into a specific cultural and communal context that is informed by ethnographic experiences. This may be significant because, while experimental research tests and retests theories to look for significance in the interaction between variables, new theories are also needed to confirm existing constructs, clarify existing variables, and identify possible new variables (Charmaz, 2006). According to Batson, Ahmad, & Lisher, (2009, p. 418), altruistic behavior seems to be activated along an empathy-altruism path but also posit that collectivism and principlism could be possible other starting points for an altruistic act. They describe these sources in the following ways:

1. Empathetic emotion - “an other-oriented emotional response elicited by and congruent with the perceived welfare of someone else”
2. Collectivism - “motivation to help a particular group as a whole”
3. Principlism – “upholding a universal moral principle, such as justice”

This study, then, has the potential to extend the research on the empathy, collectivism, and principlism as paths to altruism and perhaps add additional constructs of motivational sources of altruism.

This study is also relevant because it examines the role of calling in the process of leading others. Viewed as a fundamentally emotional process, leadership contains elements of inspiration, motivation, consideration, and charisma, as in transformational leadership which is made up of the four I’s leadership, namely, Individual Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation, Inspirational Motivation, and Idealized Influence (Bass &
Riggio, 2006). Leadership also involves moving followers toward a desired state in non-coercive ways (Greenleaf, 1977; Kotter, 1988). Fry (2007) conceptualized calling as the “spiritual” aspect of leadership that is motivated by a desire to make a difference and create meaning in the life of others.

Finally, this study provided some evidence of altruistic behavior at a communal and cultural level of analysis. This analysis may help to explain the role altruism plays as a positive social control mechanism in some cultures. Because altruism and calling are accepted as central parts of Judaism, an Orthodox Jewish community in New York City (NYC) was chosen as the research context for this study.

Interestingly, Orthodox Jews believe that Torah (study), avodah (service), and chesed (an act of human kindness) are the three pillars that form the foundation for the world and keep it in balance (Bunim, 1964). Calling is also an important part of Judaism, as Jews believe they are called to “spread light” and “warmth” to the world. By studying altruism within a culture that promotes these forms of prosocial behavior as a matter of religious practice, it was possible to gain a better understanding of the social, moral, and psychological contexts through which altruism is encouraged and nurtured. As Oliner and Oliner (1998) pointed out in their seminal study of the altruistic personality,

According to psychoanalytical theory, learning, rather than genetically transmitted predispositions, explain altruistic behaviors. It is only through identification with others and the constraints imposed by society that individuals learn to mute their innate aggressiveness and help others. Identification fosters the development of the superego, and altruistic behaviors emerge as a result of guilt for moral transgressions, imposed by the superego, and through the internalization of certain values and standards, largely developed in early childhood. (p. 9)
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Prosocial Behavior and Altruism

From the simple act of holding the elevator (a common act of helping) to saving a fellow subway rider from the rails of an oncoming train (a rare act of helping), prosocial behavior impacts us in subtle and profound ways. But no matter how heroic the act or humble the gesture, prosocial behavior seems to pay positive psychological dividends to those involved in the prosocial act. In fact, research has shown that all actors (the helper, the helped, and the observer) in any given helping situation benefit from prosocial behavior, ranging from stronger emotional stability in children (Hastings, McShane, Parker, & Ladha, 2007) to improved peer relations among subjects across all age groups (Knafo & Plomin, 2006). Given the obvious and fundamental impact prosocial behavior has on emotional development and one’s ability to get along and cooperate with others, it becomes quite apparent that the presence of prosocial behavior helps society function.

In short, prosocial behavior can be defined as “the tendency to undertake voluntary actions aimed at benefiting others” (Caprara & Steca, 2007). Branching out from this definition, the following review of the literature on prosocial behavior will focus on dispositional and situational factors that predict prosocial behavior and will include research conducted on a variety of prosocial behaviors including altruism, empathy, forgiveness, and gratitude. The review concludes with a brief discussion of some possible cultural antecedents and inhibitors of prosocial behavior such as collectivism and individualism, respectively.
To fully understand any social psychological phenomenon, dispositional and situational variables must be taken into account. Consistent with this view, person and situation have been studied in a variety of classic and contemporary research on prosocial behavior and are presented in this section. Accordingly, reviews of several empirical articles on dispositional factors of prosocial behavior are examined followed by a review of selected studies of situational factors. The section concludes with a discussion of some articles that focus on the interplay between person and situation in prosocial behavior.

**Dispositional Factors**

In one of the classic experiments on prosocial behavior, Darley and Batson (1973) exposed study participants to the parable of the Good Samaritan and then put them in a staged situation designed to expose them to a “shabbily dressed person slumped by the side of the road” (p.100). Ultimately, these researchers were interested in finding out if religious personality variables would predict helping behavior. The findings of the study indicated that religious personality variables did not predict whether or not an individual would help an anonymous person in need. In addition it was found, in terms of overall helping behavior, participants who were in a hurry and preoccupied with a task were less likely to help a victim who they encountered on the way to complete a task. Ironically, subjects who were asked to study then deliver a sermon about the Good Samaritan were no more likely to help a person in need than someone who was not thinking about delivering a sermon on the Good Samaritan. This led Darley and Batson (1973) to conclude that people who are preoccupied with a helping task in mind will often overlook helping opportunities right in front of them. However, their failure to stop and help
someone along the way may be a result of conflicting goals instead of mere callousness. Clearly, context plays a critical part in any discussion of the altruism question.

Later studies demonstrated that dispositional factors could account for the variance in prosocial behavior and were based on the notion that humans are hardwired to engage in such behavior. In their research of consistent patterns of individual differences in altruism and aggression, Rushton, Fulker, Neale, Nias, & Eysenck (1986) pointed out that previous studies have shown that altruism and aggression are present and stable over time. The authors shored up their argument with research that provides evidence for the heritability of altruism and aggression including studies of adopted children that demonstrated a genetic link to crime and delinquency. Armed with this information, Rushton, et al. (1986) conducted their own twins study to test for genetic link to altruism and aggression. The findings of their study suggest that passive genotype–environmental links are evident because altruistic (or aggressive) parents not only pass on the genetic code for altruism (or aggression) but are also more likely to “reinforce, model, and otherwise provide environments” that enhance these behaviors. Conversely, active genotype-environmental links tend to explain why “even within the same upbringing environment, the more belligerent sibling may observationally learn items from the parents’ aggressive repertoire, whereas his more nuturant sibling may select from the parents’ altruistic responses” (p. 1196).

A study conducted by Knafo & Plomin (2006) on the influence of heritability, shared environment, and non-shared environment on prosocial behavior, revealed that genetic effects accounted for the stability of, and change in, the prosocial behavior of twins who were observed from age 2 to 7 years. However the same study yielded data
that suggested that non-shared environment factors contributed to the change in prosocial behaviors over the same period of time. The authors also posited that, “Because moral development is important to prosocial behavior, and because adult prosocial behavior is often anchored in prosocial values, a further shift in the pattern of genetic and environmental influences on prosocial behavior may occur in adolescence” (p. 784).

Walker and Frimer (2007) conducted studies that revealed some reasons why people engage in prosocial behavior could be distilled from individual life stories and were found to be correlated with other assessments of personality. These life stories are influenced greatly by early life experiences including, 1) a sense of advantage in some aspect of life; 2) an awareness of the suffering of others; 3) the presence of significant others who model helping behavior; and 4) strong attachments in a variety of relationships.

To test these constructs the authors designed experiments aimed at examining the differences and similarities in the life stories of the moral personalities of brave and caring exemplars. Ultimately they found that personality variables had a significant influence on the prediction of exemplary action and also noted that caring exemplars stood in sharp contrast to comparison groups in terms of their life narratives. Moreover, moral exemplars were found to be more likely to understand critical life events in redemptive terms, more frequently identify helpers in early life, and had stronger relations with others. In contrast, brave exemplars were found to be less nurturant, generative, and optimistic than their caring exemplar counterparts.
Situational Factors

Pointing to the Kitty Genovese incident and other situations in which the bystander effect was clearly evident, Darley and Latane (1968) proffered the decision tree model to explain behavior in situations that require a decision to help or not help another. This decision tree includes three steps starting with Noticing, followed by Interpretation, and ending with Deciding to Respond. Noticing includes being aware that something is happening which leads to Interpreting the situation as an emergency, and finally taking Responsibility to intervene. As Darely and Latane (1968) state, “Only one path through the decision tree leads to intervention, all others lead to a failure to help” and, “at each fork of the path in the decision tree, the presence of other bystanders may lead a person down the branch of not helping” (p. 251). Their subsequent “smoke filled room” and “person in distress” experiments supported their observation that bystanders influence individual actions, evident in the complacency of the group when a class room was filled with smoke and in the action of the solitary individual who noticed the person in distress in the next room.

Further support for the influence of situational factors on the propensity to help was found by Volbrecht, Lemery-Chalfant, Aksan, Zahn-Waxler, and Goldsmith (2007) in their study of familial links between positive affect and empathy development. Using a sample of 584 twins ranging in ages from 12-25 months, subjects were studied using laboratory experiments in which positive affect was measured through pleasure episodes. The results of these experiments showed a strong correlation between shared and non-shared environment and positive affect and helping. In addition the authors found a significant influence of environmental factors on prosocial responding, helping, and
concern indicating that environmental influences can trigger empathy in the right situations.

Group membership was studied as a moderating variable between prosocial emotions and helping in a test of group level perspectives on the role of empathy and interpersonal attraction in helping conducted by Sturmer, Snyder, and Omoto (2005). Two studies were conducted to; 1) observe volunteering behavior in the context of providing ongoing help to a person with AIDS and; 2) replicate and extend results from Study 1 in a laboratory experiment on offering spontaneous help to a person with hepatitis. The findings of this research suggest that two pathways to helping are established through either empathy or attraction. In the case of Intergroup contexts, the use and appropriateness of the help may depend on the in-group/ outgroup relationship between the helper and helpee.

When people help an in-group member, they may do so along the empathy pathway that promotes helping irrespective of the helpee’s personal characteristics and of the helper’s interpersonal attraction for that person. Conversely, when people contemplate offering help to an out-group member, empathy pathway may be deactivated, and inhibiting processes such as, for instance, negative inter-group emotions come to the fore and lead to the avoidance of help for the needy other. (p. 544)

Using social exclusion as an independent variable to test prosocial behavior of subjects who experienced rejection by a group, Twenge, Ciarocco, Baumeister, DeWall, and Bartels (2007) found that rejection temporarily impairs the capacity for empathetic understanding of others and may also impair one’s inclination to help or cooperate with others. The authors’ desire to study exclusion was informed by research on prosocial behavior as a form of delayed gratification. Moreover, they reasoned that a person who was excluded and perceived their belongingness threatened would be less likely to
engage in prosocial acts. Indeed, they found that social exclusion might render prosocial tools useless, “possibly because going emotionally numb [upon being rejected] naturally protects the psyche from intense debilitating distress. Without empathic emotion to understand the needs and suffering of others, people lose the inclination to help” (p.64).

Lowentein and Small (2007) defined the prosocial behaviors of sympathy as caring but immature and irrational and defined deliberation as rational but uncaring. This distinction was important in their discussion of the factors that “affect the strength of sympathy, including whether one is in the same state as the victim, one’s past and vicarious experiences, proximity, similarity, vividness, and newness” (p.112). These factors were then incorporated into the theoretical perspective in which stimuli and aid are mediated by the variables Sympathy, also referred to as Scarecrow (immature and irrational) and Deliberation, also referred to as the Tin Man (rational and uncaring). Ultimately it was found that Deliberation is a function of willpower and, as such, will affect a person’s judgment on whether to provide aid. Put another way, if factors that activate Sympathy are greater than Judgment factors, the result will be increased aid. Conversely, if Judgment factors are greater than Sympathy factors, the result will be decreased aid.

**Person x Situation**

Having reviewed a small portion of the literature on a few of the dispositional and situational factors that have been correlated with prosocial behavior, research on the interaction between person and situation is presented to provide a complete and balanced review of the main variables involved in the activation of prosocial behavior. Support for exploring the interaction between person and situation can be found in Kanfer’s (1979)
assertion that a mix of personal and social controls may optimize personal satisfaction and, ostensibly, prosocial behavior. Furthermore, he proposed that egocentrically motivated altruism might provide a pragmatic alternative for regulating the relationship between person and society. Batson, et al. (1995) studied the actions of people who were faced with the decision of whether to allocate resources out of a concern for the collective good or out of concern for personal interests. The basis for this line of inquiry is founded on the notion that benefiting oneself, the group as a whole, or the person for whom empathy is felt, are three distinct goals humans often face in social dilemmas. Dilemmas in this study were structured in such a way that high-empathy participants were forced to make a decision to help the collective group or an individual for whom they felt empathy. Batson and his colleagues discovered that high-empathy participants were more likely to help one person instead of the group but these researchers also were quick to point out that this may have occurred because “rather than experiencing a conflict among self-interest, group-interest, and other-interest, empathetically aroused participants may have experienced a conflict among self-interest, group-interest, and an empathy induced moral principle” (p. 630).

These caveats led Graziano, et al. (2007) to examine personality-related processes that may explain why some nonprejudice people feel it is appropriate to express prejudice to in order to conform, and still others who are prejudice and are willing to demonstrate these feelings in the face of pressure not to. As they examined these processes further, Graziano, et al. (2007), reasoned that the Big Five personality dimension of Agreeableness, which is linked to prosocial motives, might be related to prejudice in one of four ways. Specifically, highly Agreeable people may be less prejudice than most
others because of their outward and empathic focus towards others; people low in Agreeableness may appear to be more prejudice than others but will show less positive emotions about ingroup and outgroup members; the private experience of prejudice of highly Agreeable people may not always match their public expression of prejudice; and although is seems quite unlikely, it is possible that Agreeable people hold socially approved forms of prejudice.

In the final analysis, the first study (Graziano, et al., 2007) showed that Agreeableness was not linked to “beliefs about the normative appropriateness of prejudices, but was linked to personal endorsements of prejudices” (p. 579). Studies 2 and 3 examined anti-fat prejudice, in which, it was found that low Agreeableness males were more likely to abandon an overweight partner than high Agreeableness males, suggesting that Agreeableness was “related to realistic interpersonal interaction and consequences for the expression of prejudice” (p. 579). Study 4 found that low Agreeableness led to the expression of prejudice in spite of the situation and high Agreeableness led to expressions of prejudice only when the situation justifies such expressions. Lastly, Study 5 found that people high in Agreeableness were more positive and less prejudice when strong situations were not present.

**Cultural Influences on Prosocial Behavior**

The growth and sophistication of information technology coupled with the growing interdependence of countries and economies has ushered in a new era of cultural conflict and cooperation. Understanding how our individualist, self-oriented culture influences our own prosocial behavior relative to the collectivist, other-oriented cultures found in Hispanic, Asian, Indian, Jewish, and African communities (to name just a few),
could yield important information for our own society as we begin to navigate through the new, “flatter” earth and its many cultures. It would seem that we have much to gain from learning how other cultures instill, teach, and practice prosocial behaviors.

One only has to look at a few basic economic indicators such as trade imports, individual debt, and overall consumption before you could reach the conclusion that Americans, in general, are materialist. It is a well-known fact that the US purchases, uses and discards more products in a year than any other nation on earth. But what affect does all the consumption and materialism have on individuals and groups? One study that considered the effects of materialism on well-being and prosocial behavior was conducted by Kashdan and Breen (2007) and included the finding that highly materialistic values were associated with negative emotions and social anxiety.

Moreover, and in direct relation to prosocial behavior, it was found that highly materialistic values had adverse effects on such domains of well being as relatedness, competence, autonomy, and gratitude. To wit, “materialism is inversely related to care and concern for the welfare of other people including less prosocial behavior and more selfishness and narcissism” (p. 533). This idea is supported by prior research by Hayes, et al. (2004) who found that experiential-avoidance mediates the relationship between well-being and materialism.

In their cross national study of the relations among prosocial moral reasoning, gender role orientations, and prosocial behaviors, Carlo, Eisenberg, Koller, Da Silva, and Frohlich (1996) found that US and Brazilian subjects who were other-focused and who reported robust values-based reasoning, tend to be viewed by others as being prosocial. Conversely, individuals who are self-focused and concerned with self-presentation tend
to be viewed as less generous and helpful. Interestingly, this study used a sample population from the Southwestern region of Brazil because it has been found that Brazilians from this region tend to be more westernized and, consequently, individual goals and aspirations tend to mimic those of individuals from the US.

In a study on volunteerism Omoto & Snyder (2002) noted that citizen participation is critical to building trust and cooperation in communities. Lack of citizen participation leads to complacency and social disengagement and consequently results in increased social ills such as crime, homelessness, and environmental degradation. However, they point out that prosocial behavior (in the form of volunteerism) can be activated by understanding motivation for prosocial behavior at the individual and cultural level of analysis. For instance, US citizens tend to be motivated by self-interest to engage in prosocial behaviors with the egoistic goal of increased self-esteem and personal development (Cushman, 1990). In more collectivist cultures the motivation to engage in prosocial behavior tends to be focused on the outcomes for those being helped.

To illustrate these differences, a model of the volunteer process (Omoto & Synder, 2002) was developed which shows how volunteerism works at three distinct levels of analysis – Organization, Individual Volunteer, and Broader Social System. Included in the model are Stages of the Volunteer Process that lists antecedents, experiences, and consequences of the volunteer process at each level of analysis. According to this model Organization antecedents include volunteer recruitment and training, Individual antecedents include disposition and demographics, and broader social system antecedents include social and cultural climate. Additionally, at the Experience stage the Organizations will assigns roles and manages volunteer activities, the Individual
volunteer will choose a role, perform volunteer duties and gain personal satisfaction. At the Broader Social System stage, experiences include effects on recipients of services and effects on volunteers’ social networks (Omoto & Snyder, 2001).

In the last stage of the volunteer process the expected Consequences are identified. Consequences of Organization level volunteerism are related to the productivity, progress, and fulfillment of mission. The Individual Volunteer level can expect consequences resulting in change in behavior, knowledge and motivation. In addition, commitment to volunteering and recruitment of other volunteers will result at the level of analysis. Finally, consequences for the Broader Social System included social diffusion and better systems of service delivery.

Moral imagination often promotes collective action through debate and discussion about meanings of important issues, thereby creating a shared moral perspective among individuals who make up a collective group, organization, or culture. Poll (2005) suggests that it is important to understand altruism as a function of the moral development processes resulting from interpersonal relationships. In this view, moral development is gained, in large part, from interactions with moral audiences (Coles, 1986) and from a moral imagination (Hargrove, 2009). Moral audience refers a more concrete view of moral action, rooted not in moral experiences and moral development, but rather in a moral self that is “culturally embedded…dialogical moral self that is at once decentered and reauthorized in the framework of decision and responsibility” (Day & Tappan, 1995, p. 47). Moral imagination refers to the notion that moral action results from an interaction between cognitive and interpersonal processes.
Conclusion

This review of the literature on the dispositional, situational and cultural aspects of prosocial behavior has highlighted a variety of studies that may aid in future research by providing an overview of the prevalent philosophical and theoretical perspectives on the question of why people choose to (or fail to) help others. In general, this review supports the notion that individuals and societies benefit from prosocial behavior. Hopefully, it also points out ways to activated prosocial behavior by understanding the dominant dispositional, situational, and cultural barriers and gateways to the simple, yet rare, act of lending a hand to someone in need.
Chapter III

Method

This chapter begins with a brief overview of grounded theory ethnography methodology followed by a presentation of the study population, theoretical sampling, data collection processes, and analysis procedures. A discussion of researcher bias concludes the chapter.

Grounded Theory

The pragmatic paradigm, from which grounded theory methodology emerges, states that researchers are free to choose the most relevant and useful methods, techniques, and resources as they conduct their research (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, pragmatism asserts, “any theoretical rendering offers an interpretive portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10). According to Creswell (1995),

[T]he intent of a grounded theory study is to generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon that relates to a particular situation. This situation is one in which individuals interact, take actions, or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon. To study how people act and react to the phenomenon, the researcher collects primarily interview data, makes multiple visits to the field, develops and interrelates categories of information, and writes theoretical propositions or hypothesis or presents a visual picture of the theory. (p. 56-57)

Ultimately, the social constructivist nature of grounded theory recognizes that the process of interactions among individuals allows the researcher to ground “theoretical orientation in the views or perspectives of individuals” (Creswell, 2007, p.21).

Ethnography

While grounded theory methodology provides the framework for interpreting data and organizing it into a conceptual theory, ethnographic research describes the way in
which data were gathered. Charmaz (2006) explained that ethnography requires a researcher to “record the life of a particular group and thus entails sustained participation and observation their milieu, community, or social world” (p. 21). Accordingly, an ethnographic study necessarily includes detailed notes on the actions and habits of the group being studied, robust anecdotes about the experience being studied, relevant stories that add depth and meaning to the narrative of the study as well as references to the literature and art of the culture (Creswell, 2007). This multifaceted view of the culture allows the researcher to examine the “collective programming of the mind” (Hofstede, 1993), which informs and motivates individual community members and sets them apart from other cultures.

The sustained involvement for over five years in the Jewish community, coupled with access to Jewish lifecycle events (weddings, bar mitzvahs), family gatherings, religious services and processes, form the basis for the ethnographic data presented in this study. This ethnographic data were gleaned from a wide range of processes and source material including detailed interviews, field notes, stories, and informal discussions. Non interview data were gleaned from sources ranging from Jewish web sites, to passages from historical Jewish texts, to personal anecdotes. Popular Jewish music and literature, as well as more traditional cultural artifacts such as Jewish proverbs, stories, and sayings, are combined to describe and explain Orthodox Jewish life today.

Additionally, narrative descriptions of people, places, and situations provide a tangible backdrop for this research project. Guided visits to several “yeshivas” presented wonderful opportunities to witness how young religious Jews study and prepare for a rabbinical career. As a result, this study includes sections that read somewhat like a
biographical novel, describing scenes from the streets of Jewish neighborhoods, presenting insights from conversations with Jewish students, and contemplating family connectedness based on experiences at dinner in a Jewish home. Ultimately, the data organizing method and data collection process interact in this study to produce an ethnographic grounded theory of altruistic calling in the Orthodox Jewish community.

**Overview of Research Stages**

This study consisted of the following stages:

**Data Collection**

Research data was gathered utilizing several qualitative methods including, semi-structured interviews, observations, focus-groups, and participation in activities such as cultural and religious events. Formal, semi structured interviews were conducted with Orthodox Jewish men, women, and children of various ages, professional backgrounds, and life experiences. Most interviews were conducted in homes and local settings in the boroughs of NYC, primarily in the Far Rockaway, Five Towns, and Kew Garden Hills neighborhoods in Queens, and the Crown Heights and Boro Park neighborhoods in Brooklyn. Interviews and observations took place in Jewish homes, *shuls* (synagogues), *yeshiva* (rabbinical school) classrooms, restaurants, coffee shops, cars, trains, offices, and over the phone. This stage produced descriptions of events and experiences, providing context for this study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

All interviews (n = 36) were transcribed for line-by-line analysis. Researcher observation notes, journal entries and the like were also used to add background information on specific phenomena observed by the researcher. Analysis of interview and observational data resulted in emergent themes that were then further analyzed to
produce constructs. The goal of this step is to create conceptual order, which is the interpretation of data along specific dimensions and within specific boundaries (Corbin & Strauss, 1998). The dimensions of this study are grounded in the research and theories of prosocial behavior, servant leadership, altruism, and calling which are covered in the literature review section. Boundaries in this study were established by focusing the data collection on those behaviors and ideals that promote altruistic calling in the Orthodox Jewish community.

**Theorizing**

Corbin and Strauss (1998) define a theory as, “a set of well-developed categories (e.g., themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social psychological … phenomenon” (p.22). In this final stage of the research a theory will be presented to graphically depict how altruism is taught, understood, and reinforced in the Orthodox Jewish community. This theory is grounded in the data collected from the methods described in the first stage, i.e. subject interviews, group observations, participation in culture events and so on.

**Participants**

Clearly, conducting research for an ethnographic grounded theory study requires consistent and frequent contact with the population being studied. For this study, access to the Orthodox Jewish community was gained through frequent trips to NYC to teach onsite Masters level Educational Leadership (Ed. Leadership) courses under the auspices of Bellevue University in Nebraska and The National Council of Young Israel (NCYI) an Orthodox Jewish community support and advocacy organization located in NYC.
Permission to conduct research with students in the Young Israel Education Program (YIEP) and other members of the Orthodox community was granted by letter from the Executive Director of the NCYI (Appendix B). The student population in this academic major is made up of Orthodox Jewish men and women who are seeking a secular degree that provides professional development and potential for career advancement.

Most students enrolled in the Educational Leadership program were male and female teachers or administrators from Jewish day schools, middle schools, and high schools across the United States with the majority of students coming from the East Coast (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, Florida). Other students lived in California, Texas, Illinois, and came from as far away as Canada and Israel. Less than a quarter of the 100 students who have completed the Masters in Educational Leadership program came from private business (banking, wholesale/retail etc.), or non-profit Jewish social service organizations that provided services for at-risk Jewish youth, Jewish family support, educational testing, and the like. Continuous contact was maintained with the Jewish community through online teaching and communication with Jewish students and community leaders. Ongoing contact will occur for the foreseeable future through additional teaching assignments, future research projects, and friendships.

This relatively rare and unfettered access to the Jewish community supports Robert’s (2002) point of view that a partnership must be developed between the researcher and the research subjects. This partnership “brings together the skills of the researcher with the real-world experiences of the researched, and in researching [cultural environments] the partnering approach is critical to enable theoretical sampling, a core part of the grounded theory method, to occur” (p. 157).
**Participant Selection Criteria**

In keeping with the grounded theory methodology, this study utilized theoretical sampling strategies. Charmaz (2006) stated that “theoretical sampling means seeking pertinent data to develop your emerging theory [emphasis in original]” and, moreover, theoretical sampling is conducted to “elaborate and refine” (p. 96) theoretical categories. Theoretical sampling ends when no new categorical properties emerge.

Participants were recruited for this study through personal contacts (snowball sampling techniques). In order to participate in this study, a participant had to be an observant Orthodox Jewish male or female. Informant criteria was confirmed; the researcher collected participant contact information and made arrangements for the interview. Demographic and contextual information for this study was gathered from the participants’ providing a detailed description of the participants in the study. Additionally, an interview protocol written by the researcher was used. The protocol consists of twelve open-ended questions (Appendix C).

As part of the Internal Review Board (IRB) process, a Letter of Informed Consent was provided to all participants who were recorded during interviews (Appendix D). In cases where children were interviewed or observed, Parental Informed Consent (Appendix E) was obtained by signature from parents, and child assent was obtained by signature on the Child Assessment Form (Appendix F). Arrangements were made to have at least one parent present in the room when interviews with children under the age of 18 took place. In addition, all recorded interviews that involved children were attended by a non-affiliated observer who is familiar to the researcher. The unaffiliated observer is a Doctor of Medicine who also holds a Master’s degree in Public Health. The
unaffiliated observer filed his human research training credentials with the University of Nebraska IRB office.

Interview data for the 36 participants were used in the present analyses. The number of participants was determined by the concept of “saturation” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) or “redundancy” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Both of these concepts suggest the researcher should include participants in interviews until it becomes evident that additional data will not add meaningful information to the emergent themes and theory. Data were confirmed by conducting a member check, a verification strategy in which the researcher interviews participants to clarify information or add further explanations to concepts gathered in the interviews.

**Participant Demographics**

The demographic distribution of the interview subjects included men, women, and children. Of the 36 interview participants, 22 participants were male (Male = 22) and 14 participants were female (Female = 14). The average age for both genders was 39, giving the entire sample an average age of 39 as well (Mage = 39). All but three of the participants were married. Eight participants were under the age of 18. All male participants over age 18 had either rabbinical ordination or were studying toward ordination. All participants under age 18 were enrolled in private Jewish schools or were preschool age. Occupations of adult participants included, clergy, homemakers, teachers, school administrators, non-profit human services workers, non-profit Jewish organization executive, non-profit Jewish organization workers (program director, office worker, etc.).
Interview Protocol

According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory interview questions should proceed in a sequential order including: 1) Initial Open-ended Questions which are general questions about an incident or event related to the research question. These questions are used to open up the discussion for the interviewee and allow them to find a starting place to talk to the interviewer; 2) Intermediate Questions include more specific probes about thoughts and feelings related to the action. In this stage, questions about personal beliefs and values most likely will emerge; and, 3) Ending Questions focus on “lessons learned” and insights gained from the experiences discussed in the interview.

Upon gathering demographic information from the participant, the sequential format described above was used to guide the interview. Open-ended Questions in this study focused on the Orthodox Jewish community. Intermediate questions focused on relationships with parents and other adults who have had an impact on their life. Finally, the Ending Questions in this study focused on insights the participants had about their individual views on the purpose, practice, and outcomes of altruism. Extensive field notes were taken and interpreted at the end of each day of research.

Three general constructs related to altruistic behavior were applied to establish a starting point for the questions in each stage of the interview process. The first construct is growth of concern for others, which focuses on the time when the subject first begins to “reveal an interest in and reaction to the needs of others” (Grusec, 1981, p. 67). A sample question in this section would be, “Do you remember a time, when you were younger, that you felt concern for another person? Please tell me about that incident”.

The second construct used to guide the inquiry is “empathy-specific rewards and
punishment”. This construct refers to the role of parents and other adults in the establishment of empathy through reward and punishments (Batson, 1991). A typical question from this construct would be, “Can you recall a time when a parent or other adult rewarded you for helping someone or punished you for not helping someone?” Please describe what happened in both cases – how were you rewarded or punished?”

Finally, the third construct, prosocial moral judgment (Eisenberg, Lennon, & Pasternack, 1986) refers to dilemmas faced by children “concerning conflicts between prosocial behavior and obedience to rules or laws” (p. 125). A sample question based on this construct would be, “Have you ever been in a situation when you felt like you wanted to help someone but were afraid you would be going against ‘the rules’ if you helped that person? How did you handle that situation?”

Research Logistics and Interview Schedule

Specific locations for the interviews and observations were secured by contacting former students and other Orthodox Jews known by the researcher. The location of the interview with the day and time of the interviews was confirmed by email, phone, or in person. The interviews (n=36) were conducted from October 25, 2009 – October 6, 2010 in person and by phone. Each participant or group of participants was interviewed from 45 minutes to 1 hour. Of the 36 interviews, 12 interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Three family interviews were conducted but only one was recorded. The participants in the one recorded family interview were at least eighteen years old and the setting was conducive to a set down interview. It was not feasible to record the other two families because of activity in the background (family members coming and going) and normal family interruptions. In addition to these family interviews, ethnographic
observations were made during less formal family visits and family celebrations such as weddings, Bar Mitzvah, etc.

When possible, interviews were recorded on audiotape for transcription. After each set of interviews were completed, the interviews were transcribed by a trained transcriptionist from the Orthodox Jewish community so that all idiosyncrasies such as Yiddish or Hebrew phrases were recorded accurately, and so that other unique factors such as regional accents and dialects would be clearly understood and recorded. The transcriptionist was recruited through word-of-mouth. A fee arrangement was negotiated between the researcher and transcriptionist. In addition, a Transcriptionist Confidentiality Form (Appendix G) a Transcriptionist Contract was signed by the transcriptionist (Appendix H).

The Jewish Switchboard

When general questions arose about specific aspects of Jewish life and customs, experts were contacted to help explain the finer points. Rabbis, rabbinical students, workers in Jewish organizations, teachers and Jewish housewives routinely answered questions regarding Jewish laws and theology as well as family customs and traditions. This process worked much like a “Jewish Switchboard”, with the researcher reaching out to an initial contact source for additional information or clarification. If the initial contact was unfamiliar with a concept or unable to answer a question, the contact would recommend an expert for additional information. Subsequent calls were made until a clear and satisfactory answer was obtained.
Data Analysis

As stated above, grounded theory is a research paradigm that is aimed at creating a new theory or elaborating upon existing theories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory is not used to test theories. The grounded theory building process involves “conceiving or intuiting ideas…and formulating them into a logical, systematic, and explanatory scheme” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 21). The process also involves the interaction of data collection, development of concepts, and ultimately suggesting relationships between concepts. Throughout this process, emerging themes, constructs, and theories are “grounded” to the data. Likewise, the clarity of the emergent themes, constructs, and theories are based on clear definitions, contextual circumstances, semantic relationships, and coherence (Hillman, 2010). Hillman (2010) reinforces this call for construct clarity with a clear statement that “…[constructs] are usually the result of creative building upon preexisting constructs, which themselves refer to other extant constructs, in an ongoing web of referential relationships” (p. 350).

The process of data coding in a grounded theory study involves several steps for the researcher. First, the researcher must be sensitized to the central themes of interest by reviewing extant theory and research thereby further grounding research in theory. Second, the data is scanned for relevant words and concepts. Third, focused attention is applied to words, phrases, passages, and other information relevant to the theory. Finally, data are conceptualized by labeling and extrapolating information in a creative and imaginative manner (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The coding procedure applied in this study closely follows the steps suggest by Charmaz (2006) which are largely based on Glazer’s (1978) and Strauss & Corbin’s
(1990) approaches to data analysis. The data were analyzed using four levels of coding; 1) initial coding (line-by-line coding, invivio codes), 2) focused coding, 3) axial coding, and 4) theoretical coding. At all stages of the coding process, the data were searched until recurring themes and codes reached a point of saturation and the researcher was satisfied that analyzing the data further would not add anything new to what had already been discovered (Creswell, 1998). Triangulation of the data also occurred at all stages of the research project with multiple sources of verification used to confirm findings. Once again, these sources included observations, member checking, Jewish writings and source texts, and general participation in the Jewish cultural milieu.

Saturation of themes was reached after the twelfth interview in this study. At this point, the decision was made to change the interview protocol in order to focus on questions that could help clarify and add depth to the already saturated themes. I began to search for possible reasons for the high degree of consistency of responses between respondents. As a result, the second interview protocol was more free-flowing, beginning with questions about specific concepts from Jewish source texts, customs, and practices related to altruism and calling, all of which had been repeatedly referred to during the first twelve interviews. Additionally, the second set of interviews were conducted in decidedly more spontaneous ways with interviews occurring “on the fly” in multiple settings and locations. These interviews were not recorded because the interviews occurred in settings that made recording difficult or impossible. Several phone interviews were included in this second set. In all of these cases, interview notes were taken when possible and interview content was entered into a reflective journal. This procedure was based on Charmaz’s (2006) notion of the sustained presence of the
researcher in the researcher setting as a guiding force in the direction and content of the line of inquiry. Examples of a recorded interview and phone interview are included in Appendix I & J.

**Initial Coding**

Initial coding is the process of examining each sentence of interview transcriptions, observation notes, biographies and other written material to label each line with a name or code. Charmaz (2006, p. 50) stated that this step can be aided by the following strategies:

- Breaking the data up into their component parts or properties
- Defining the actions on which they rest
- Looking for tacit assumptions
- Explicating implicit action an meanings
- Crystallizing the significance of points
- Comparing data with data
- Identifying gaps in the data

The goal of this step in grounded theory is to get a closer look at what participants said in interviews or what they did during observations. Line by line coding also involves highlighting and collecting *in vivo* codes. In vivo codes represent specific terms used by the participant which are used to ascribe meaning to their thoughts and actions. These codes are then examined to condense their meaning and action. They are then coded in ways that relate directly to the data and emerging categories.

For this study all interview transcriptions and field notes were scanned line-by-line. Transcriptions were formatted so that the text was on the right half of the paper with
a left margin consisted of a three inch textbox the length of the page. As the transcript was scanned, notes were typed into the left margin that identified key actions and processes, clarified significant points, in keeping with Charmaz’s (2006) advice for conducting line by line coding.

**Focused Coding**

The next step in the data analysis process was to bring more focus to the data by selecting codes that help combine multiple ideas and concepts ultimately reducing and refining the data (Charmaz, 2006). Interview data were examined for recurring codes and code themes. Some themes became saturated very quickly so that by the time all the interviews were completed, a small bit of focused coding had already taken place. The resultant list of codes and themes acted much like a lens, bringing fuzzier codes, general descriptions, and other bits of information into a coherent level of focus.

Relevant data were re-read more closely to locate and clarify aspects of altruism and calling hidden in initial codes or within specific passages of the transcripts. Codes and data were compared across interviews and other data sources and insight were noted in memos at the end of the transcripts. For instance, informative codes from one interview were overlaid onto another interview to help clarify or illuminate data in that interview (Charmaz, 2006). At the same time, gaps in the data were beginning to narrow as the coding and member-checking process progressed. Member checking is a technique to verify data by checking with members of the population being studied (Creswell, 1998). In this stage member checking was used to help bring more focus to the emerging codes.
Axial Coding

According to Creswell (1998), the axial coding step involves organizing and reconstituting large amounts of data in new ways in order to add meaning and clarity to the emerging data. For this study, I followed Charmaz’s (2006) suggestion to develop subcategories of categories and then show how these ideas are linked together.

Rather than being a linier interview-by-interview process, coding of the interviews involved iterative and ongoing within, and between, interview analyses. This process corresponds to the pattern described by Parry and Mendl (2002) as to the coding processes within and between interview data. Taken together, these steps create an entire process of interwoven activities that allow the theory to emerge from the data and adding more and more clarity and definition to the relationships between emerging constructs. Memo writing and free writing helped reduce codes in the initial coding and focused coding stage and later aided in making connections between codes in the axial and theoretical coding stages.

Theoretical Coding

At this stage, relationships between codes are revealed and corresponding hypothesis about these relationships begin to emerge and the first constructs of the grounded theory begin to take shape (Charmaz, 2006). In this study, the first construct to emerge was related to low empathy. The creation of the model involved making sure the connection made sense from a data standpoint. For this step I asked myself the question, “Does this proposed relationship describe what I saw and heard in the interview data and what I saw and heard in the ethnographic context”? Then I linked or, grounded, this relational model to empathy-altruism and the principlism construct research from Batson.
As stated in the literature review of this study, Batson (1987) posited that although we can observe an empathy-helping relationship, the ultimate goal of the helper may be to gain a self benefit resulting from unintended consequences such as recognition for helping or some kind of reward for helping. Batson (2007), also considered principlism and collectivism as other possible sources of altruism.

**Researcher Bias**

As an ethnographic researcher I came to this project with certain biases that are rooted in my socialization process and worldview. While measures were taken to minimize the effects of my personal biases on this research, in the interest of full disclosure, I offer the following factors that could arguably have biased the results of this study.

**Partnership Bias**

As previously stated in the Background section, this study resulted from a partnership between the researcher’s employer and the NCYI, a Jewish support and advocacy organization in New York City. The researcher was responsible for curriculum development and instruction of courses offered to students who were recruited through the NCYI. The researcher did not receive any money directly from the NCYI for professional services. The researcher’s teaching obligations were part of his contract with his employer.

Given the nature of the partnership, I acknowledge that it is possible that my line of inquiry could have been moderated by the need to maintain a positive relationship within the community. As Graziano, Bruce, & Sheese (2007) mentioned, “some people may be biased toward seeing all (or most) people in a positive light, for maintaining good
relationships with them, and for getting along and being liked” (p. 566). On the other hand, several of the ethnographic experiences described in this research took place outside the context of the organizational partnership.

Furthermore, virtually all of my findings can be corroborated and verified by consulting Jewish source texts or Orthodox Jewish scholars. Ongoing discussions of topics such as altruism (*chesed*) and many other prosocial behaviors are discussed daily in study groups, schools, and synagogues, Jewish blogs, or any number of Jewish communication outlets. I am reasonably confident in stating that altruism and calling are stable and consistent parts of the Jewish lexicon, worldview, and religion. My line of inquiry was informed and directed by social psychological constructs of altruism.

A couple of measures were taken to help address possible bias in the interpretation of data. First, two researchers with extensive experience in grounded theory research were enlisted to help verify that interviews and field notes were coded properly. Second, when specific Jewish philosophical or religious principles were referred to which required further explanation, an Orthodox Rabbi and/or a Torah scholar was consulted to help interpret the meaning or intent of any such information. As the research project unfolded, adjustments such as these were made to address other possible researcher bias.

**Nonjudgmental Orientation**

In order to ameliorate possible issues raised by the biases described above, I took a very non-judgmental stand toward the culture and people presented in this study. Therefore, I can confidently state that I went into this research project understanding that I was privileged to be allowed to teach, socially interact, and conduct research within the
Orthodox Jewish community. I had no ethnocentric aim nor did I exhibit any
ethnocentric behavior during the duration of this study. That is to say, I did not view my
own cultural values as germane to this study. I suspended my own beliefs when
interacting with the research population in the roles of instructor, researcher, partner,
friend, and guest. Likewise, all of the members of the Orthodox Jewish community I
came in contact with treated me with respect, also with a non-judgmental orientation.
Chapter IV

Results

Emergent Constructs

Themes and theoretical codes that emerged from the data were verified and compared to extant theories of altruism and calling, thereby grounding the emergent constructs in the altruism research literature. The results reported in this section came about by comparing the research data to the conceptual framework of theories of altruism listed in Figure 2 below. In subsequent sections of this chapter, each theory, construct, description combination is reassembled to reflect how the current theories and constructs were either modified or clarified to provide a succinct picture of how the various paths to altruism work within the context of the Orthodox Jewish community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy-Altruism</td>
<td>Empathetic Response</td>
<td>Motivation to help is emotion based. Help another to help one’s self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Egoism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collectivism-Altruism</td>
<td>Benefit the Group</td>
<td>Motivated to produce positive collective outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group Identity</td>
<td>Concern for group welfare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principlism-Altruism</td>
<td>Benefit the Other</td>
<td>“Transcendent” self, focused on the other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moral Integrity</td>
<td>Responsible for upholding a moral principle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Altruism theories and constructs (based on Batson et al., 2007; Coles, 1986; Hargrove, 2009).
Participant Characteristics

This section begins with brief descriptions of a few clearly established characteristics of the Orthodox Jewish people, families, and communities that provided the context for this study. These descriptions are based on ethnographic observations and experiences, in-depth discussions about Judaism with Orthodox Jews, and extant text and research on Orthodox Judaism (Charmaz, 2006) with the purpose of producing as accurate list as possible some of the consistent behaviors and values I encountered in preparation of this study. This information is important to the process of establishing a context in the form of a cultural backdrop that gives place and meaning to the processes described in the emergent constructs.

After composing each characteristic in the list below, the individual characteristics were discussed by phone with a member of the Orthodox community to help refine the accuracy of the descriptions. The end goal of this process was to create a valid list of characteristics that would be understandable to non-Jews and also accurate in the eyes of Orthodox Jews.

People of the Word

A primary defining aspect of Orthodox Judaism is the study of Torah, or the bible, comprised of the five books of Moses. Torah not only tells the story of Jewish history and civilization from its very beginning, it also contains 613 commands; the original Ten Commandments as well as an additional 603 commandments, derived from the five books of Moses. These commandments or Mitzvot are categorized into 365 negative commandments and 248 positive commandments. Negative commandments are those that prohibit such acts as murder, adultery, theft and so on. Positive commandments
provide direction on what should be done when conducting business, celebrating a holiday or lifecycle event, preparing food, and many other aspects of Jewish daily life (Donin, 1972).

The Talmud, or commentary on Torah, is made up of a staggering 63 volumes and over 12,800 printed pages. Each page contains a central tractate that is surrounded with progressively smaller and smaller commentaries from great scholars, rabbis, and sages. Torah and Talmud are studied daily by Jewish males for as much time of the day as possible. Rabbinical students attending yeshiva debate and discuss the finer points of Torah and Talmud in lively multi-person, multi-issue debates. A typical day in yeshiva is made up of 8-12 hours of study.

**Love of Learning**

I heard the following story from a rabbi: “A somewhat famous rabbi once appeared as guest on a non-Jewish radio talk show. At one point, the interview came around to the topic of Jewish education. The interviewer said to the rabbi, ‘Rabbi, your community is very well known for its emphasis on education and the students in your community always test out as some of the brightest students in the country. My question is this; how soon do you begin educating your children?’ The rabbi answered, about 18 to 20 years before they are born”.

Studying Torah, Talmud, and many other important Jewish texts is a significant aspect of Jewish life, which is evident in the weekly hours, spent reading and discussing Jewish history, law, and theology. Jewish books are ubiquitous in Jewish homes, businesses, and gathering places. And there seems to be no bounds to when or where a Jewish person can study. In fact, one novel approach to studying is used daily on a NYC
area commuter train. Each morning, on one car of the train, you will find a Jewish study group, busily pouring over the daily Talmud lesson or “tractate”, led by a local rabbi who has been conducting these lessons for 20 years (Yi, 2005). During my own travels around NYC, I personally noticed that Orthodox Jewish subway riders were always reading a Jewish source text while traveling from one destination to another.

**Two Jews, Three Opinions**

Early on in this ethnographic study, I realized that virtually any issue brought up in a formal classroom setting or in a group discussion outside the classroom, were subjected to a passionate and robust examination. The discussions were not the type in which one person speaks, then another, then another. Instead, issues were discussed in an exchange between multiple participants at once. At first, this method seemed chaotic, but I was soon taught the phrase “two Jews, three opinions”, meaning that for every issue, multiple perspectives will be applied to the discussion vis-à-vis appropriate sources.

Learning through debate begins early in a young Jewish man’s life. Debate is a central part of the yeshiva (or rabbinical school) method of instruction. During rabbi-guided visits to several yeshivas in Brooklyn, I witnessed a large room full of young rabbinical students in groups of five or more students all engaged in a lively debate of a specific aspect of the Talmud that was proposed by the lead rabbi in the room. My rabbi guides also showed me the tall bookcases that lined walls of the main room with Talmudic texts and other reference sources. Students whizzed by us on their way to the bookshelves to pick up a specific volume for reference in their debate. Meanwhile as a rabbinical student debated with another student, a third student entered the conversation to discuss the central issue while, at the same time, maintaining the original debate with
his group of three or more study partners. I often described this form of discussion as “three dimensional debate”.

**Observing Shabbos**

One of the central commandments from Torah is to “keep holy the Sabbath. This means that Orthodox Jews are not allowed to conduct business, perform works of labor. Or “start a fire” on Shabbos. Therefore they are forbidden to drive automobiles or engage in any activity that requires the use of electricity. Shabbos begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. Jewish families and friends walk together to services and celebrate the various aspects of Shabbos, opening their homes to family members and friends who may come from nearby or far away to celebrate this day of rest with loved ones.

Shabbos is a time for reflection and relaxation. For 24 hours at the end of each week, Orthodox Jews spend their day studying and conversing with family. Shabbos is but one of many extremely important beliefs and practices, that bring the Orthodox Jewish community together and provide a common, shared spiritual experience.

According to Donin (1972),

To persons looking in from the outside – Jew or gentile – the Sabbath might appear to be restrictive. A cursory acquaintance with its restrictions might lead one to assume that it is an austere day for those who observe it, a day lacking joy and spirit. Yet experienced from within, it is just the reverse. It serves as a glorious release from weekday concerns, routine pressures, and even secular recreation. It is a day of peaceful tranquility, inner joy and spiritual uplift, accompanied by song and cheer. (p. 62)

**Modesty**

Jewish men and women work together and interact with each other socially in appropriate and modest ways. In most cases, men are not allowed to shake a women’s
hand out of respect for the women’s physical boundaries and also to avoid physical contact with a member of the opposite gender who is not one’s spouse. Orthodox Jewish men and women wear modest clothing, professional attire for men and modest but modern attire for women. Modesty is also practiced in speech and conduct. Vulgar language is frowned upon and boastfulness is distained.

Humor Abounds

A rabbi was once asked by his non-Jewish friends, “Rabbi, whenever I hear you discuss an issue with another Jew, you always seem to answer every question with another question. I would like to ask, why so many questions?” The rabbi looked at his friend and answered, “Why not?”

Many of the interviews conducted during the course of this study were sprinkled with Jewish humor. The Jewish brand of humor I encountered was witty, ironic, and often self-effacing. Humor in the Jewish community is often used to make a point, convey a philosophy of life, or lighten the mood in a serious setting. In short, humor is used to help both the socialization and learning processes.

Many Jewish jokes or humorous stories end with morals that are revealed after the laughter has subsided. When a concept or idea is presented but not quite comprehended by the receiver, the presenter of the idea will often inserted the familiar phrase, “have you ever heard the story (or joke) about so and so?’ The joke or story is then told to help the receiver imagine the story in a more creative way, resulting in a memorable and satisfying lesson (Cueva, 2010).
Commitment to Family

While Jewish values and conduct are rooted in religious source texts, Jewish life is clearly rooted in family and community. Life for a child born into a Jewish family begins with big family celebrations that include a bris (ritual circumcision) for boys, Bar Mitzvah also for boys. Parents work hard, sometimes holding down two or three jobs to provide their children with a solid home and a good education. Since they have larger than average family sizes, older siblings are often seen assisting with the care for younger siblings, keeping them entertained by reading with them or playing games with them. And it is not uncommon to have a set of grandparents living in extended family situations, providing yet another layer of supervision and stability to the home.

All of the children met and/or interviewed for this project were confident, intelligent, well mannered and respectful. In each home I visited there was an air of cooperation and happiness. I was struck by how consistent the habits and routines were from home to home. For example, at mealtime in every home, some children helped their parents prepare meals while their brothers or sisters completed homework assignments nearby. Conversation during meals was always interesting and stimulating. Topics ranging from Judaism and archeology to American history and science were served up at dinner in robust and lively discussions. After meals, pre and post Bar Mitzvah age boys were off to study Talmud with their study partner at the shul down the street. Young siblings and girls either continued to study homework or were out the door to go help with a charity or community event.

When a child reaches an appropriate age for dating and marriage, they state their intentions to begin dating. Dates are often arranged by shidduch (a matchmaking
process) which includes gathering and sharing information on the male and female who are to be matched. Matches are made along very important lines including shared values, personality compatibility, and background and so on. By the time a couple meets for the first date, always in a public setting, they already know a great deal about each other. Couples do not continue dating if either party is not comfortable moving to the second date. Most couples date for a relatively short time, rarely over one year, before they announce their intention to marry. This whole process is designed to create families that are reared by compatible parents, thereby strengthening families from generation to generation.

**Commitment to Community**

Jewish neighborhoods like Boro Park, Crowne Heights, Five Towns, and Williamsburg all have commercial areas where the streets are lined with small stores ranging from delis, grocery markets, clothing stores, gift shops, and pharmacies. The vast majority of these small businesses are owned and operated by Jews from the neighborhood. Local, Jewish based media outlets include AM radio stations that feature Jewish programming. Radio ads promoting local businesses admonish listeners to support their local grocer, candy store, computer shop, or restaurant. As one rabbi put it, “Living an Orthodox Jewish life requires a certain amount of infrastructure”. Based on my own observations, the local business community provides this necessary infrastructure in a competitive yet interdependent web of small business enterprises, making it easy for Jewish customers to “act locally”.

Other examples of commitment to community were found in the non-profit social service agencies and aid organizations that dot the landscape in Jewish neighborhoods.
One such organization is *Hatzolah* (rescue or relief), an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) organization that is completely operated by local Jewish volunteers. Some interesting facts about Hatzolah include this information from the official Hatzolah Facebook page:

The original Hatzolah EMS was founded in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York, USA by Rabbi Hershel Weber in the late 1960s, to improve rapid emergency medical response in the community, and to mitigate cultural concerns of a Yiddish-speaking, religious Hasidic community. The idea spread to other Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods in the New York City area, and eventually to other regions, countries, and continents. Hatzolah, as an organization, is the largest volunteer ambulance service in the world. Chevra Hatzolah in New York has more than a thousand volunteer EMTs and Paramedics who answer more than 250,000 calls each year with private vehicles and a fleet of more than 70 ambulances.

Hatzolah members were among the first responders to the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Alongside other rescue workers, Hatzolah volunteers risked their lives to rescue, treat, and transport countless victims of the terrorist attack. In the process they earned great respect from their peers in the emergency service community. (Hatzolah, 2010)

Hatzolah emergency vehicles are a ubiquitous feature along the streets in Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan. The well trained volunteer members of the various Hatzolah teams are enthused and proud to be part of this community support organization. During a visit to one Hatzolah station in Brooklyn, I witnessed volunteers mobilize from seemingly out of nowhere to answer six emergency calls within a one hour time span.

Other volunteer organizations known as *gemachim* (short for *gemach chasidim* or “acts of kindness”) were originally established as interest free micro loan organizations but have expanded into all imaginable areas of service. As one respondent put it, “gemachim provide anything you need”. Gemachim directories are chalk full of ads for gemachim that provide everything from free wedding dresses, to a service that provides a lock exchange program, replacing locks and keys for homeowners who have lost their
keys or have had their home broken into. Gemachim are often formed by individuals who have experienced need themselves and want to make sure someone experiencing the same need in the future can find resources and help by simply picking up the phone – help is on the other end of the line.

**Pride in Way of Life**

There was great deal of pride for family, community, and country (U.S.A. & Israel) amongst the Jews I encountered over the past five years of ethnographic study. They are proud of and take seriously their mission to be exemplars of true righteousness on earth. The Jews I met were not self consciousness about their dress, customs, or habits.

Orthodox Jews are proud of the fact that they survived several millennia and are likewise cognizant of the fact that all the empires and madmen that tried to destroy the Jewish people were instead destroyed. They are proud of their fellow Jews who have contributed to the advancement of knowledge in the fields of science, medicine, economics, literature, theatre, and other areas of study. And they are proud of their country of Israel. Achievements and setbacks in Israel are celebrated and suffered together by Orthodox Jews.

**Humility**

But in spite of their pride, Jews are their own worst critics. Whenever I complimented my Jewish friends and colleagues on their vibrant community and way of life, I was almost always met with the comments such as, “we have our problems to” or “we are not perfect”, or “you observed us on a good day”. They point to concerns with at risk youth, other garden variety social problems, and the unfortunate stresses and
problems that sometimes arise from having a large family. Most of the mothers and fathers I met in this study worked at least one job with several participants working two or more jobs to provide a good home and education for their children.

One participant put it like this:

But I feel, mainly I feel the pain of my fellow Jew. Now people will say, well can’t you feel the pain of all humanity, why just Jews? Because a person feels more strongly to their next of kin. Your children, you would want to help more than somebody else on the street, even though you wish those other people well, you have to help the ones that are closest to you first. And we look at each Jew as our brother and sister, even though all humanity we’re related to, but a Jew is more like a closer relative. Our fellow Jew.

**Empathy-Altruism**

This section reports the results of data analysis relative to the empathy-altruism theory provided in Figure 1. Interview passages and additional ethnographic information are provided as evidence of the seemingly alternative empathy-altruism path that is present in the Jewish community. This section concludes with a modified construct of the altruism-empathy path that emerged from a comparison between research data and research literature.

During the early stages of my research when I was simply looking for cultural evidence of altruism, I heard many people talk about doing a “mitzvah” when discussing doing a kind, altruistic act. For several months, I thought *mitzvah* and altruism were interchangeable. In fact, during the proposal stage of this research project, I was under the impression that I was studying *mitzot* (plural form of *mitzvah*) as a sign of altruism in the Orthodox Jewish community. Therefore, *mitzvah* became an in vivo code within my journal notes, meaning that it was a word commonly used by the participants to describe an action. I had also heard the word *chesed* used to describe the kind act, but at this point
I was under the impression that *chesed* was somehow another word for *mitzvah*. During
the first interview, armed with the in vivo code *mitzvah*, I began to describe my research
as an exploration of *mitzvot* or acts of altruism, when the participant stopped me and said,
“Are you asking about *mitzvah* or *chesed*?”

When I asked if *mitzvah* was not the same as *chesed*, the respondent very kindly
told me that the two words were completely different but almost immediately pointed out
that the terms were often incorrectly taken to mean the same thing. This is how the
respondent explained the difference:

The word *mitzvah* is based on the word *tzav* which means to command. A *mitzvah*
is a commandment. It’s through slang it’s become a good deed. But it’s really not
a good deed.

It can be a good deed, but it means a commandment. A *mitzvah* is a
commandment.

It’s a very common misidentification for a lot of people. Cause you say,
do a *mitzvah*, you know.

*Chesed*, then, related to the construct of altruism early on in the research
and would later be used to help explain the construct of principilism as a path to
altruism (Batson, 1994). From this point forward I felt that there was a clear
connection between the study population and culturally or ideologically based
forms altruism.

Further evidence of *chesed* as a central part of Jewish culture can also be found in
this quote from a recent article the Orthodox Jewish magazine, *Viewpoint*, a monthly
Jewish life magazine that runs a special “*chesed* edition” every summer:

Amazingly however, for the thinking Torah Jew, something slowly evolves over a
lifetime and a stunning reversal takes place: *Emes* [truth] becomes innate;
*Halacha* [Jewish law] with all of its minutia and complexities becomes second
nature, whereas *Chesed* – through life’s many lessons – becomes a matter of
thought, preparation and sensitivity to the receiver. In fact, these two concepts
merge under the idiom of *Chesed Shel Emes*, where no longer is the good deed
about our own need for fulfillment (although that, too, is healthy) but about doing
what is right, long term. (Taub, 2010, p. 9)
As mentioned in the Interview Protocol section, all the questions in the protocol were derived from theoretically based constructs of altruism as outlined in Figure 1. At the starting point of the interview portion of this study, the line of inquiry, for all intents and purposes, began and ended with questions related to the empathy-altruism path. This line of inquiry also included questions about the feelings one has toward the person being helped along with questions about possible egoistic or reward motives. This seemed prudent considering the fact that the empathy-altruism paths, and its related constructs of egoistic motivation and empathy specific rewards, were the only ones that really had been successfully explored in altruism research (Batson, et al., 2009). However, some questions were also beginning to emerge in the altruism research that suggested collectivism and principlism as possible motivating factors of altruism. Thus, questions along the empathy-altruism path ranged from queries about the feelings one has for those being helped to inquiries about possible rewards, punishments, role models, and so on.

**Low Empathy**

Many times when I asked the question, “How do you feel about the person being helped?” I received what I often described as a “deer in the headlights” look on the faces of the participants. Some asked me to repeat the question and others took a long pause before answering. Most responses were along the line of “I never really think about it. This is just what we’re supposed to do.” In every case, regardless of age or gender, respondents came to the conclusion that they had not acted out of empathy, for empathy is motivated by ego, as in “I feel sorry for that person because I went through a similar experience, or I can imagine being in that situation”. In the last stages of this study, while reviewing the notes I took during the interviews, I noticed that I identified “low
empathy” as the entry under Focused Codes. Luckily, an unaffiliated observer was on hand during all recorded interviews, which meant I had someone to do verify information with between and at the end of interviews.

In the case of the “low empathy” code, I discussed my finding with the unaffiliated observe on our subway ride back to the hotel. We had just finished an evening of family interviews, and were both catching our breath from the experience. As we settled into our seats, I asked my companion what he made of the responses to the so-called empathy-altruism questions. After a few minutes of back and forth discussion, we arrived at the term Righteousness to describe the state of mind that might result in altruistic act with low empathy. We came to this conclusion because we had both noticed that the respondents usually said something like, “when I help someone in need I am doing it because it is the right thing to do”. This information was later confirmed in ethnographic evidence from some writings on the subject of chesed/altruism in Jewish source texts.

In terms of egoistically motivated altruism, one participant addressed this issue by explaining that it is common for people to think they will get an ego boost from helping someone, but this must always be kept in check by focusing on what is best for the person in need:

A person comes knocking on someone’s door, and he says I’m hungry, give me a sandwich. Please help me. So the person on the other side of the door will say, you know, if I give him a few dollars so I’ll feel all good about myself that I did such a nice act of charity. So maybe I shouldn’t do it because my ego is going to grow, maybe I shouldn’t do it. But if I do do it, so then he’s thinking, so I’ll do it so it will help him, but then I’m going to feel all good about myself. So a person is constantly involved in his own world. But this guy needs a sandwich right now. I don’t care if you’re going to grow a big ego from giving him a sandwich. But at the end of the day he needs the sandwich right now. You’re going to grow a big
ego? That’s not good for you. But that’s your problem. But he needs a sandwich right now. So you need to help him right now.

As one Rabbi put it, “The decision to help is not based on viewing others as helpless. We must leave our own view of the situation out of the picture. My decision to help is based on the idea that if a person needs help, you lend a hand – no matter what”.

This passage from a family interview captures some of the main aspects of the unintended consequences and feelings about the helping a person at cost to one’s own desires and demands:

I remember when I was in high school; I went away with my synagogue’s youth group. We had a weekend in a hotel, so all the kids were there and I think it was our synagogue and a number of other synagogues, and one of the people running the weekend came to me and said, you know, I have a funny question for you, but there’s a young man our age, this was I guess tenth, eleventh grade, who’s blind. And I’m trying to, how would you feel about rooming with him and sort of keeping an eye on things. And, I’m not sure why I was asked, I never did find out. But I said okay. And then I found myself really thinking about what it meant to extend yourself. Cause I was going away to have fun and be with friends. And suddenly I was given, I don’t want to say chore, but I was given a task, I was given an assignment, and suddenly it meant that I wasn’t going anywhere without somebody holding onto my elbow. And suddenly it meant, I could sit with whoever I wanted on this side of me at the table, but my other friend was sitting here and I had to cut his meat for him. And that was really the first time I ever thought about all the implications of what goes on with things. When you asked your question, like, I don’t know if I thought about that in years. But I remember as a, whatever I was, like I said, high school sophomore or junior, I was, the request was made of me, I agreed to it without even thinking about it, and there, as I said, just because it was, I guess it wasn’t a setting where I would have thought, you know, I have a chance of doing something. But that really was the last time that I found myself thinking about it step by step. Maybe that helped. I think now, you know, I don’t think about it. There’s a person, and you respond, and it’s, you know, I don’t have wings and I don’t wear a halo, and while I was both proud and embarrassed with the things that the kids have been saying a little bit, but that’s not why we do it either. I mean, this is life. There are people. And there are people. And they’re all part of the same world, and everybody deserves the same opportunities, and if we extend ourselves, that’s why we’re here. That’s why we’re here.
Emphatic Joy

The empathy-altruism line of questioning also revealed a pronounced empathetic joy response from participants when posed with a general question about a time they helped someone. This questioning induced many interesting stories that very often ended with the helper and the helped feeling increased levels of joy.

I mean, yes, I’m helping that person. But I want to help that person. I want to help him. And, I mean it’s just like an automatic reflex. I don’t think oh this is going to make me feel good so I’m going to help this person. But I noticed after I did certain things to help somebody, I saw that it made me feel good. And that it was a motivator.

However, this respondent went on to point out that in many situations it is preferable to be on the giving end of the kind act as opposed to being the one in need.

I remember realizing one time, you know in those days we were all scuffling, I used to work in film, as I told you, we did work freelance, and there were times when we go a couple of months without work. And I didn’t have money. I just scraped by, paid the rent. And I noticed one time I didn’t have money, and I was with a friend of mine, we went into a supermarket, and he bought the food. And I was uncomfortable. And I realized at that time how much more I liked it when I could buy the food for somebody else, than I was the recipient on the end of an altruistic act.

The following passage describes empathetic joy as an outcome of her kind action toward a friend. Fulfilling the wish of a friend who asked for a birthday cake on a day unrelated to her birthday, this participant told of a situation in which helping another person made the helper and the helped feel happy. Here is how she explained it:

I said, but it isn’t your birthday. She said, I know, but I love birthday cake. So I made a real birthday cake, it wasn’t even her birthday. You know, with pink frosting and everything. She was feminine, so I made it, you know, and then she took it and shared it with her friends, she was so excited. Because I guess that she comes from a place where a lot of people weren’t that kind to her, so she was really very appreciative.
But I appreciated her too, because I had little children at the time and sometimes she used to stay with them, I could run out and she was home. So it worked both ways. I’m happy to make people happy.

Other evidence of empathic joy was also found in other non-recorded interview and conversations. During one unrecorded family interview, a very young female respondent stated that, “She always felt happy when she knew the person she helped was happy”. While many elementary school children acknowledged that their helping activities at school and in clubs were sometimes motivated by a reward of some kind, they also included a word or two about feeling happy after helping someone.

At this stage in the research the data were combined with the empathy-altruism theory, resulting in the following construct which provides a depiction of the empathy-altruism path as it seems to work in the Orthodox Jewish community. Furthermore, it is based on the low empathy and empathetic joy responses that were common among a majority of participants and evident in the majority of ethnographic interactions encountered by the researcher.

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<th>Theory</th>
<th>Construct</th>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy-Altruism</td>
<td>Low Empathy</td>
<td>Internalized prosocial values.</td>
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<td>Empathetic Joy</td>
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*Figure 3.* Empathetic response path in study population.

**Collectivism-Altruism**

Following the intriguing discovery of low empathy responses from the interviews I returned to the altruism literature to check for similarities between the data and other
constructs of prosocial motivation and altruism that might explain this low empathy response. The literature also suggested that other possible ways a person could be motivated to act altruistically is along a collectivist-empathy path. In this and subsequent sections on emergent constructs, interview data will begin to fade into the background as it is replaced by descriptions of ethnographic experiences, all of which is based on researcher field notes and journal entries. Because the original interview protocol did not have questions grounded in the theory of collectivism-altruism, I turned my focus from empathy to collectivism in discussions with member of the community and when making observations in the field.

Previously, I provided some evidence-based ethnographic descriptions of the strong sense of community found among the participant population. Additional observations and smaller bits of interview data suggested a high level of interconnectedness to the extent that participants routinely mentioned that they believe, “Everyone is responsible for everyone and everything”. This saying appeared early in field notes and was repeated throughout the five years of interaction with the Jewish community.

Y1: Somebody had told me that our grandparents, our ancestors in Russia, they had hard lives. They barely had a piece of bread on their table, but they didn’t go to a therapist every day or whatever it is, they were just happy people.

Other evidence of this collectivist worldview was found in field note entries that mentioned benefiting the whole. For example, during one discussion of the possible collective nature of altruism in the Orthodox Jewish community, the wife of a rabbi pointed out, “the notion of collectivism has been known in Judaism and is commonplace in the bible.”
**J:** For example, whenever Moses speaks about the blessings and curses attached to the covenant, he speaks about the nation as a whole. Moses does not delineate between one person and the rest of the tribe. And there is an assumption that when G-d rewards the nation of Israel, every Jew is rewarded.

The act of *davening*, or praying, requires a *minun*, or ten men to be present before prayers can begin. In other words, prayer is a collective experience. Not only do Jews pray together, they mourn together. On the Day of Atonement they confess together.

According to some interview notes on the topic of collectivism, Jews believe that the Israelites became an *edah*, a body politic, as opposed to an *am* which is a people with shared ancestry and history.

**Benefit the Group**

Aside from kosher delis, the most ubiquitous feature in Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods would have to be the community based service agency. As mentioned previously, organizations like Hatzalah EMS and many individual *gemachim* (free loan organizations) exist solely to provide services for the community. Help for poor families, orphans, and the disabled can easily be found in Jewish neighborhoods. Many of the Orthodox Jews I spoke to openly and honestly about some of the challenges and hardships that befall members in their community. Most of these discussions ended with a reminder from the participant that the Jewish community is like any other community. It has its share of problems. There are at risk families and children struggling under the pressures and dysfunctions that plague all societies. Likewise, social ills and deviant behavior can also be found in the community, but the community reacts to these challenges with services whenever possible.
But not all community organizations are healthcare or social services related. In addition, there are summer camps and other local year round camps run by Jewish non-profit organizations. Summer camps are nestled in the Catskill Mountains and are staffed by workers and volunteers from the community. One of the camps is dedicated to providing a camp experience for very ill children. Another focuses on disabled campers. In both cases, the camp’s volunteer waiting list is filled up for years in advance. Teen volunteers clamor for a spot on the volunteer list as it is considered a great honor to be able to provide care for children and other members of the community who need extra care and attention.

This sense of “benefit the group” is also practiced at the family level. During visits to Jewish homes, there was a noticeable sense of group responsibility. Older children took care of younger children and with very few requests from parents. One adult female respondent told me:

A: There was always an unspoken rule that you help whenever you can. If you see that a chore or task could get done quicker – like when everyone is preparing for Shabbos or holidays, you don’t think twice about pitching in to help. Everyone benefits when you add your effort to help the group.

Ultimately, several participants explained to me how all experiences in Jewish history involved the cooperation and commitment of everyone to help the community survive and thrive. Their understanding of the importance of helping the group is informed by stories and lessons from the Bible showing how Moses spent his time, struggling at times, to keep his nation on the move healthy and functional. He was able to accomplish by continuing to focus on the needs of his community. And this is a concept that is seemingly at the forefront for most all of the Orthodox Jews I met.
Moral Audience

“Who benefits from the altruistic act? Those who witness it.” – Rabbi Pesach Lerner

Along with a strong sense of helping the group also comes a sense of responsibility for the right conduct of community members. The Jewish community is an active community, with people interacting in an extremely tightly woven network that has the ultimate effect of reducing the so called “degrees of separation” from one person to another. While it could be said that all close knit communities have low degrees of separation, the Orthodox Jewish community which is many times larger than most close knit communities, has remarkably low degrees of separation. A rabbi once told me, “If two Jews meeting for the first time cannot identify someone they know in common within the first ten minutes of meeting, they just have to wait ten more minutes”. Ultimately this interconnectedness unfolds into a community of individuals who, a) all follow the same ancient rules (from one degree to another), and b) have a vested interest in the function and longevity of the whole community. This may explain why Jewish neighborhoods are always ranked among the lowest for crime and violence.

An example of how the Jewish community acts much like a moral audience can be found in an example from Halacha, or Jewish law. Halacha provides very explicit and strict rules regarding lashon hora (or evil tongue) that prohibit slander, revenge, and deceit. The mere act of passively listening to an evil tongue, or gossip, is considered morally repugnant. Likewise, making snide remarks, taking revenge, holding a grudge or cursing another person are all examples of lashon hora and should be avoided at all costs. Interestingly, these laws also forbid plagiarism, praising someone in front of their enemies, and shaming children or adults (Donin, 1972).
This notion of lashon hora provides one vivid example of how the community forms a moral audience, one that does its best to not tolerate gossip or hard feelings. Soon after I learned about the concept of lashon hora, I mentioned that I had been trying to practice “no lashan hara” in my life and commented that it is harder than it seems to rid our conversations completely of lashan hora when one considers that the passive act of listening to lashan hora is also forbidden. After making this comment, everyone said, “join the club, we struggle with it too!” But the point here is that the Orthodox Jewish community has a rule forbidding something that can ultimately be damaging to a community and it takes the cooperation of the whole community to be a moral audience on this point alone. In fact, gossip and slanderous talk in the form of lashan hora is considered to be a more serious sin than adultery, murder, idol worship, and all the other commandments taken together.

Finally, the moral audience is also evident in the phenomenon of “Two Jews, three opinions” mentioned earlier in the Participant Characteristics section. This constant discussion, analysis, and debate – which takes place daily – serves as a forum for a moral audience to evaluate the righteousness or error of thoughts and actions within the community at the present moment. In addition, this moral audience continues it debate and refinement of moral issues even as the world around them changes.

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<td>Collectivism-Altruism</td>
<td>Benefit the Group</td>
<td>“Everyone is responsible for everything”.</td>
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<td>Moral Audience</td>
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*Figure 4. Collectivism-Altruism path in study population.*
Principism

The essence of Judaism is purpose and morality. – Aryeh Kaplan

According to Pirke Avoth (Ethics of Our Fathers), the great sage Simon the Just set forth a principle of Judaism that stated, “the world stands on three things; on Torah (Study), Avodah (Service to G-d), and chesed (man’s kindness in action to his fellow man). Taken together, the world will remain in balance. Take one pillar away and the world goes out of balance. In the Jewish mind, the three pillars is a principle of spirituality in the same way gravity is a principle in the physical world. Just as gravity keeps the physical world on this earth from flying apart, the three pillars keep humankind from spiraling out of control. The principle of the three pillars is a common and well-known aspect of Jewish life. Just as their great leaders and sages discovered many hundreds of years ago, the Orthodox Jew realizes that the survival of mankind depends on a combination of mind (study), body (service), and spirit (the kind act).

The combination of cognitive processes, prosocial motivation, and cooperation also has been found to increase the function of groups and also contributes to positive social environments (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). The findings in this section suggest that the principles of the three pillars of Judaism support the construct of Benefiting the Other in the Principlism-Empathy theory (Batson, et al., 2009), and also resides in the Moral Imagination of Orthodox Jews.

Benefit the Other

The evidence for a Jewish philosophy of Benefit the Other can be found in individual and community level actions of everyday Jews. The notion of benefiting
another is firmly rooted in Jewish source texts and is further articulated in modern Jewish writings as is evident in the following passage:

There is nothing inevitable or divinely willed about social and economic equality. Judaism rejects the almost universal belief in antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages, that hierarchy and divisions of class are written into the structure of society. What human beings have created, human beings can rectify. It followed that everyone should be provided the basic requirements of a dignified life. The sages inferred this from the biblical phrase, ‘be open-handed and freely lend him \textit{whatever he needs}’ [italics in original]. (Sacks, 2005, p.36)

Benefiting another can also be seen in the following quote from a participant who explained that to honestly benefit another, the beneficial action must be completed without any thought of self reward.

**M:** But once it is given, we are taught that the most ultimate way of giving, fulfilling the commandment, is giving at a very pure, sincere way, without any interest, without any expectation of kickbacks or other favors in return. So this is called, in Hebrew it’s called \textit{lishmah}. \textit{Lishmah} means for the sake of the commandment itself. Without any other interest.

And it is permissible to break or bend even the most stringent religious rules to save a person’s life, representing a total commitment to benefiting the other.

**S:** An Orthodox Jewish ambulance service, and here a man in the synagogue, their beepers go off, they’re immediately in the ambulance, and they came and they checked him out. There in the synagogue, and they put him on a stretcher and they brought him to, you know, and there wasn’t any thought to it. It wasn’t a matter of, am I compromising my Sabbath observance? Am I doing anything that is threatening the connection I feel with God on His seventh day, the day of rest.

It isn’t a matter of that. Religious law says very clearly, the health of a person, the life of a person, takes precedence over that. So it wasn’t a matter of bending the rules, it was a matter of the rules say, we get out of the way for his. The rule doesn’t exist. There’s a sick person, it’s not Sabbath anymore, now it’s Tuesday. Do what you have to do.

In response to a question about bending or breaking rules to benefit another two respondents had the following exchange:

**M:** The law. See, Jewish law, I would like to think that I would never break to do a kind act. And that it would never be necessary to break it to do a kind act, because,
**Y:** You’re allowed to break it sometimes.

**M:** Well then it’s not the law. That’s what I’m saying. It’s not the law. If I see a person drowning on Shabbos, I’m allowed to run into the water even though I’m not allowed to go swimming on Shabbos, or go into a lake, but I’m allowed to go in and save them. If I see a person who needs to eat, or if I, God forbid, need to eat food that’s not permitted, or that’s not cooked yet, on Shabbos, to save a life, to save my life, or to save a, I’m allowed to cook that food, even though it’s against Jewish law to cook on Shabbos. But now it’s not against Jewish law, because the law says, to save a life you’re allowed to do it.

**Moral Imagination**

In terms of moral imagination, the Orthodox Jewish ideology promotes imaging a better world, a more just and peaceful world. Early in this study, during a conversation on the way to the airport, a rabbi told me that, as Jews, “we must continually chase after peace”. The pursuit of peace requires an imagination that is fixed on an ideal state of peace and cooperation among all people.

In addition, moral imagination is present in the notion that humans are connected on a physical level, acting and behaving in a tangible world and also at spiritual level, conceptualizing the relationship between man and the world, man and his fellow man, and man and the divine.

**M:** And as I said, it combines both aspects, the divine and the, the group *bein adam lechaveiro*, between man and fellow man.

In the words of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (2004), the Jewish civilization came into existence as result of a “critique of civilization”, a critique that imagined what the world would become without a moral path to walk. This moral path represent a way to “continuity, tradition, and stability”.
While breaking the rules to save a life could be argued to be evidence of benefiting the other, as in the previous section, breaking rules or laws seem also to hint at a moral imagination, as in the follow passage from a recorded passage:

S: It wasn’t a matter of, am I compromising my Sabbath observance? Am I doing anything that is threatening the connection I feel with God on His seventh day, the day of rest? It isn’t a matter of that. Religious law says very clearly, the health of a person, the life of a person, takes precedence over that. So it wasn’t a matter of bending the rules, it was a matter of the rules say, we get out of the way for his. The rule doesn’t exist. There’s a sick person, it’s not Sabbath anymore, now it’s Tuesday. Do what you have to do.

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<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principlism-Altruism</td>
<td>Benefit the Other</td>
<td>Study, Service, Altruism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Moral Imagination</td>
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*Figure 5. Principlism-Altruism path in study population.*

**Calling**

Journaling was used to reflect on the connections between the thoughts, actions, and words I was encountering during ethnographic experiences. An instance of this occurred one night after attending the wedding of a local rabbi’s daughter. After the wedding, I went home and wrote some thoughts in my journal about the similarity between the local wedding I had just attended and the other two previous wedding I had attended a few years earlier in NYC. First of all, I noted that the divisions between various Orthodox cultures and ideologies dissolve at weddings and other big life cycle events. At weddings in NYC and Omaha, Jews from the local Hassidic, Modern
Orthodox, Labovitch Hassidim, Ultra-Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform communities were in attendance, to some degree, at all the weddings I attended.

But perhaps the most important conceptual connection I made in my journal was between the celebration of lifecycle events and a deep connection to the past shared by all Jews. During wedding ceremonies, I noticed that virtually every step of the wedding was somehow linked to the past. The bride and groom received blessings from the oldest guest first; elderly rabbis who had most likely survived the Holocaust were the first to give their blessing to the couple followed by a long procession of progressively younger, and younger honored guests. The bride and groom walk around the chuppah several times to signify the building of the First Temple. Toward the end of the service the bride and groom break an empty glass in remembrance of the destruction of the temple. During the wedding, one of my former students told me breaking the glass reminds us that for every happy occasion there have been sad and mournful events that others overcame for the sake of future generations.

The final journal entries I made related to “connections to the past” were from the local wedding I attended. During that wedding, like all Jewish weddings, the bride and groom stood underneath a twilight sky (in NYC the sky is visible through the opening in the wedding hall ceiling, revealing an open square of night sky directly above the chuppah). As the ceremony progressed one rabbi said a prayer in Aramaic, which is the precursor language to Hebrew. Aramaic was the language spoken during the time of the first Jews in history. Upon completing the prayer, the rabbi explained that being wed under the night sky is done in remembrance of the very first Jewish couple who were
married under a night sky, in the desert, during a service that would have been said in Aramaic.

A few years ago, during a multi day Bar Mitzvah celebration, I attended the prayer service that marks the beginning of Shabbos. The service was held in the basement shul of a Hassidic rabbi who lived up the street from the family I was visiting. Other Jewish guests who were in town for the Bar Mitzvah walked to the service with the Bar Mitzvah boy, his family, and several family friends from out of town. We all crowded in to the basement shul with other Jews from the neighborhood. As the Hassidic rabbi read from a prayer book, one of the non-Orthodox Jewish guests leaned over to me and said, “I cannot even read or understand Hebrew, but I can tell you that the prayer you are listening to is exactly the same as when it was first read over 3000 years ago. Not a single letter or word has been changed since that time”.

**Make a Difference**

While discussing the notion of making a difference as part of a inner calling, one male participant directed me to the following passage from the Jewish website Aish.com.

It’s interesting to note that in Judaism, the essence of kingship is not to rule or to legislate, but to be a provider for the nation. That is why we refer to God as the “King of Kings” -- because He is the ultimate provider of life itself. Historically, certainly at the time when the Jewish people actually had a king and throughout most of history since then, a king was little more than a great exploiter -- the polar opposite of the Jewish idea. By and large, kings have taken the resources of others to serve themselves. Only from the time of the French Revolution some 200 years ago was that idea seriously challenged.

In previous sections on collectiveism-empathy, and principism-empathy, many participants discussed the importance of making a difference the lives of others and the world at large. In order to not belabor the point, this brief section on making a difference as an aspect of calling ends with the following quote from a male participant:
Y: So if, according to that theory that everything is one, when we go out and we help someone else, when we look at other people, when we know that we’re all part of one big society, or one big energy, and his good is also my good, so then it makes the whole business much, much easier. It makes everything much better because what we’re doing is we’re adding positive energy into the world. In other words, now he’s going to be a happy person, it’s going to affect the world.

**Life Has Meaning**

As in the section on making a difference as part of the theory of calling, the current section will be brief because several aspects of the construct of life has meaning has already been presented in the findings in the three theoretical constructs of altruism.

A rabbi put it this way:

P: We believe that G-d did not give the world to us just so we could exist in a physical sense. We believe there is a World to Come, which equates to an eternal life. Therefore, while we derive meaning from the kind and moral acts we do out of our commitment to uphold a moral principle; we also believe that there is some ultimate meaning in the rewards in the eternal life we are promised. To simply exist and not pursue some higher purpose does not square with our teaching and ways of life. Life has meaning to us in very big ways and very small ways. It means something to live a religious life and to follow the rules that govern every aspect of our lives. And there is meaning in our existence as a community, as a nation of Jewish people.

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<td>Desire to Make a Difference</td>
<td>A vision of life’s meaning and purpose.</td>
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<td>Life Has Meaning</td>
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*Figure 6. Constructs of calling.*
Chapter V

Discussion

Summary of Major Findings

This study began with a standard line of inquiry, grounded in previous hypotheses and studies of factors that motivate altruism in the general population including empathy, unintended consequences of altruism, and altruistic role modeling. Counter to past research suggesting altruism is activated along an empathy-altruism path (Batson, et al., 2007) the findings of this study revealed a consistent low empathy response by participants when asked about their feelings about those in need. However, when asked to describe outcomes of helping situations, there was a consistent high empathetic joy response, indicating the helper and the helped both experience satisfaction and improved affect from such interactions.

A collectivism-altruism path appears to have been established by a strong sense of community, which is manifested in the notion that “everyone is responsible of everything”. In addition, the collective community acts as a sort of moral audience that reinforces kind acts and discourages selfish acts. Finally, both the empathy altruism and collectivism-altruism paths seem to converge at the principlism-altruism path, in which altruism is ultimately activated by a desire to uphold a moral principle - in this case, the Three Pillars of Judaism: Torah (Study), Avodah (Service), and Chesed (Kind Act). These principles are conceptualized through a moral imagination that is engaged through continuous reflection and by taking account of one’s actions.

Calling is seen as an aspect of the Orthodox community in the spiritual purpose shared by all Jews, which is to spread light and to be an example for the world. The
notion of being God’s chosen people points to the hereditary aspects of calling, as this view has been handed down for between 3000-5000 years of Jewish history as an inherited aspect of being Jewish. Calling seems to be activated through ancient rituals, customs, and is likewise reinforced through daily study, discussion, and interpretation of laws. Devotion to something outside self is a salient aspect of Jewish activity and thought.

The major findings of this study are reassembled in Figure 7. Accordingly, calling is shown as the precursor to the theorized paths of altruism previously described in this study. Findings suggest that the presence of a sense of calling at the individual and communal levels of analysis may contribute to lower levels of altruism in individuals, ostensibly due to the idea of making a difference in the lives of others for the sake of the act itself.

**Implications**

In this section, several implications for future research and application of the emergent grounded theory are presented. Because the impetus for this study came from a study on altruistic calling as a construct of Servant leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), the first several implications relate to possible ways other constructs within the Servant Leadership framework could be studied in the Orthodox Jewish community. Implications for research in other areas of leadership are also presented along with possible follow up studies on previous theories of altruism. This section ends with some final tangential concepts for consideration.
Figure 7. An integrated model of Altruistic calling in the Orthodox Jewish community.

**Servant Leadership**

Present findings suggest the construct of altruistic calling in the context of Orthodox Judaism seems to be a function of low empathy, high concern for the welfare of collective others, and principlism based notions of benefiting the other and upholding a moral principle. Future studies similar to this one, may help to further clarify and operationalize other constructs of servant leadership. The remaining four constructs of the Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) provide an interesting array of topics to be studied including, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship. These four constructs and possible functions within the Orthodox Jewish community are explored in the following paragraph.
In the Orthodox Jewish community, emotional healing takes place at the micro level in the form of Shiva (mourning) in which mourners are not allowed to be involved in work activities, household duties, entering into contract, making business decisions, and the like. Emotional healing occurs slowly and over a one year period. Emotional healing at the macro level takes place in the Jewish community during periods of mourning for the destruction of the first and second Temples and also during commemorations of the Holocaust and other struggles the Jewish people have endured. Studying the emotional healing process involved in Jewish mourning periods and other acts of emotional support could yield valuable insights into the nature of emotional healing.

Wisdom is a much respected attribute in Judaism. Wisdom is viewed as a combination of personal knowledge coupled with personal experience that aids in the ability to make sound decisions. Jewish sages, learned rabbis, and scholars are looked upon with great respect and admiration. Their writings and public comments are studied and contemplated by other Jews to help add clarity and insights to both good and challenging experiences in life. Elderly Jewish men and women are respected for their relative proximity to the sources of knowledge and wisdom in Judaism. Given the increasing issues and questions raised by an aging population and workforce, a study on wisdom in the Jewish community may yield some important ideas on how to gain the most from the wisdom imparted by older, more experienced organizational and community members.

Barbuto & Wheeler (2006) define persuasive mapping as “sound reasoning and mental frameworks” (p. 319). Based on the research gathered in the present study,
persuasive mapping could be studied in numerous ways within the Orthodox Jewish community by observing, interviewing and interacting with Jewish community and organizational leaders who use their persuasive mapping to motivate and engage others. Case studies of great Jewish leaders such as Abraham and Moses could also be developed to demonstrate persuasive mapping as a large scale, ongoing process. Given that all Jewish leader/exemplars are perceived as being wise albeit flawed figures, case studies would likely produce some interesting and pragmatic insights into the how respect, credibility, and humility factor into persuasive mapping.

Other case studies or ethnographic research could also be conducted to determine how the gemach and other community organizations mention in the present study could be used to inform the construct of organizational stewardship within Servant leadership. These non-profit organizations as well as other for-profit Jewish organizations tend to be committed to giving back to the community in very fundamental and useful ways. Studying the effects of organizational stewardship on employees and community members in the Jewish community may provide a glimpse into a unique yet ubiquitous feature of the Jewish community landscape.

**Organizational Leadership**

The present study found that the highest path to altruism, namely, the principlism-altruism path, appears to be a very salient aspect of altruism in the Jewish community. At the source of principlism in the present context is the oft cited Three Pillars of Judaism (study, service, kind acts). With an understanding and respect of these sacred principles, they might be able to be adapted to an organizational context as a model for organizational leadership and development. “Study” could be conceptualized as learning
and understanding the historical and present day practices of a company. Studying could also refer to the act of self study through reflection and self improvement. Both forms of study, if properly encouraged, could lead to higher levels of self awareness among leaders and followers thereby creating healthier, less hostile workplaces. This approach could be informed by research on transformational leadership in organizations (Bass & Avolio, 1993)

As the second pillar of Judaism suggests, service is a key to a functioning, balanced world. The same could be said about having a service minded outlook towards one’s job or profession. Developing service minded leaders and workers could also have potentially positive effects on organizational culture and performance. Again, great Jewish leaders such as Moses, who was chosen by God to lead the Jewish people, was chosen not for his power over others but because of his desire to serve others. The same is true of Abraham, who was known to have a tent with four doors to allow guest traveling from any direction to enter his tent. The themes of service, humility, and generosity run through many Jewish stories and teachings, providing a possible stream for leadership development case studies, readings, and activities.

Finally, the third pillar, chesed (altruism) could be examined as a model for such organizational behaviors as Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Altruistic Organizational Citizenship behavior. At this stage in the research, age seems to be the best predictor of these behaviors in organizations. Given that altruism is an expected behavior in all Orthodox Jews, regardless of age, perhaps this principle could be studied to find ways to activate altruism in workers at all levels of an organization, regardless of age.
Servant Leadership Development/Responsible Use of Power

The paths to altruism in this study include empathy-altruism, collectivism, altruism, and principlism-altruism. As such, these paths may provide a way to assess and develop servant leaders. Assessing which path, if any, a leader uses to arrive at altruism could provide clear insights into the level of altruistic calling a would-be servant leader possesses. A servant leader who bases their altruistic act on an empathetic response alone may be limiting their opportunities to help others at the collectivism or principlism levels of altruism. Future research could focus on developing an assessment instrument which could aid servant leaders in understanding their own “calling” to serve others. Empathic servant leaders could consider ways to broaden their view beyond an ego based response to a more collectivist view of organizations or communities. Likewise, collectivist minding servant leaders could be encouraged to establish a set of guiding principles or motives for acting altruistically.

In terms of responsible use of power, self awareness and self improvement have been established as essential parts of Jewish life. This also has potential implications for leadership development. Research has shown power reveals the person, reduces perspective taking, compassion, and also affects social attentiveness (Galinsky, Rus, & Lammers, 2011). Tapping into the self improvement and self awareness techniques used in Judaism could pay dividends in the cause for developing leaders who are disposed to use power wisely and judiciously in order to motivate other in positive, authentic ways. Self aware leaders who rise to positions of power are preferable to insecure or narcissistic leaders who use power to hide those things about themselves they do not want revealed to followers.
Further research could be conducted to investigate how power is conceptualized and used within the Jewish community. Self awareness, perspective taking, and other aspects of power in Jewish organizations could be examined for links between Jewish views of power and influence and the current literature on power’s effects on personality and decision making.

Advancing Theories of Altruism and Scale Development

Another possible implication of the present study could be to replicate some past studies on religious prosocial motivation. The following summary of Batson’ (1989) study on this topic is one example of an altruism study the could be replicated in such a way as to increase the overall validity of the study by selecting subjects from a religious community to include both genders and a wide range of ages and levels of education.

Batson and colleagues (1989) based their study of the sources of altruistic and egoistic religious prosocial motivation on Allport’s (1966) findings, which conceptualized religious involvement as either extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic religious involvement was described as using religion as a means to gain a safe and happy life. Extrinsic religious involvement also includes the notion that rewards in this or the next life is an outcome of adhering to a specific “way of life” (Allport, 1966, p. 455). Intrinsic religious involvement is when one views religion as a set of shared commandments and a means to gain wisdom and enlightenment about the spiritual aspects of the human experience. Whereas extrinsic religious involvement is about “self”, intrinsic religious involvement is about transcending self. Allport (1966) ultimately found intrinsic religious involvement to be strongly correlated with altruism.
Later Batson, et al. (1989) developed a scale of religious orientation that further defined involvement as external or internal and religious orientation as either interactional or Orthodox. An external orientation indicates a view of the church as central to religious development and role models as examples of religious development. Internal orientation sees religion as a hardwired human response to seek an understanding and commitment to God. Moreover, an interactional orientation suggests a view of religion as an ongoing process of questioning and discovery. The Orthodox orientation believes in a just and merciful personal God, and in the authority of the bible and its teachings. However, in contrast to Allport’s (1966) study, the Batson, et al. (1989) study revealed a much lower than expected correlation between intrinsic religious orientation and altruism suggesting that intrinsically oriented helping is not really altruistic after all. They suggest that intrinsic religion is more closely associated with egoistic prosocial motivation than originally thought.

However, this study suffered from a couple of overall threats to its validity. First, the homogenous sample for this study (n = 106) was made up of all Christian introductory psychology students. The study was also conducted at universities in affluent college towns. Homogenous participant demographics along with the use of self-report measures could be replaced in a future study with comparison groups of Jewish and non-Jewish men, women, and children using a mixed methods or similar study to discover a deeper understanding of altruistic and egoistic prosocial motivation.

In addition to possible opportunities for replicating some altruism studies, there is also potential to use the present study as a springboard for research on altruism scale development. According to Sosik, Jung, & Dinger (2009), a more robust measure of
altruism is needed to capture a wider range of altruistic behavior at the group level. The population used for the present study may provide some strong opportunities from developing and testing a new altruism scale. This same scale could be administered and further refined in other cultural milieus or organizational settings.

**Tangential Concepts**

Several tangential concepts arose during the course of the present study providing interesting and useful topics for further exploration. These topics include reducing *lashen hora* (the evil tongue) in organizations, the rabbi as transformational mentor, power of interconnectedness, and storytelling and humor in development of prosocial behavior at the individual and group levels.

**Lashen Hora**

Many interesting concepts related to ethics and personal conducted emerged from general conversations or as side notes in semi-structured interviews. Among these concepts was *lashen hora*, or “the evil tongue”. As mentioned previously, *lashen hora* refers to spreading rumors, gossip, and generally criticizing or unnecessarily flattering someone behind one’s back. This behavior is considered to be more serious than many of the biggest commandments combined. However, gossip, rumor mongering, and behind the back conversations take place at work and social situations on a daily basis. There are also additional rules and ethical guidelines in Judaism that prohibit holding grudges and similar behaviors when conducting business or negotiating. Studying the perceived consequences of “the evil tongue” and learning about ways to confront such behavior could add additional relevance to future organizational leadership implications of this research.
The Rabbi as Transformational Mentor

The rabbi plays an important part in the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of the young Jewish students who come to them for individualized guidance and advise. Most young Jewish men have a personal rabbi they study with and consult when faced with religious or personal issues. As part of the ethnographic aspect of the present study I was aware from almost the beginning that the rabbi is fundamentally a lifelong mentor for their mentees. Based on my cursory observations of the rabbi-student relationship, there seems to be indications of the Four I’s of transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006) present in this relationship. This relationship may provide a transformational mentoring model in which the mentor engages with mentee at an individual, intellectual level while at the same time inspiring the mentee and providing the mentee with an image of an idealized state of spiritual awareness.

Power of Interconnectedness

This topic relates to the phenomenon of low degrees of separation and the power interconnectedness can bring to an organization or community in the form of an informal communication network that disseminates accurate and timely information. This idea sprang from several instances in which I noticed how quickly information made it through a rather large group of Jewish community members. In the Jewish community, everyone seems to know each other and individuals are often linked by only one or two people. The net effect of this interconnectedness is quick information dissemination or retrieval. Important, informative news travels fast in the Jewish community, and a connection is easily made between a a specific question and an answer from seemingly the one person in the group who is informed on the subject in question. In one instance, I
described this organic web of information as “a human Google search”. Studying the effects of this tight level of interconnectedness may not only provide some important insights on informal communication networks, but also how this interconnectedness functions to support and protect the community.

**Storytelling and Humor as Facilitators of Prosocial Behavior**

Most of the humor and storytelling I encountered during this study was not only funny and memorable, but virtually every joke or story included a moral, providing food for thought about human relations, ethics, or religious beliefs. An interesting study might be to collect a series of Jewish jokes and stories and compile them to be used to support the instruction of specific ethical, interpersonal, or leadership concepts and theories. Case studies from famous and obscure Jewish stories could be developed to highlight specific leadership constructs or theories and jokes could be used as tools for reflection on complex issues or concepts.
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Appendix A

IRB Letter of Permission to Conduct Research
October 23, 2009

Stephen Linenberger
Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication
2631 N 122 Cir Omaha, NE 68164-3521

Daniel Wheeler
Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication
6001 S 88th St Lincoln 68526-

IRB Number: 20091010304EP
Project ID: 10304
Project Title: Cultural Antecedents of Altruism in the Orthodox Jewish Community

Dear Stephen:

This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board’s opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution’s Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46).

Your stamped and approved informed consent forms have been uploaded to NUgrant (Informed_Consent_Form-Approved.pdf file). Please use these forms to make copies to distribute to participants. If changes need to be made, please submit the revised informed consent forms to the IRB for approval prior to using them.

Date of EP Review: 10/19/2009

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Final Approval: 10/23/2009. This approval is Valid Until: 10/22/2010.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:
• Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
• Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
• Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
• Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
• Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

For projects which continue beyond one year from the starting date, the IRB will request continuing review and update of the research project. Your study will be due for continuing review as indicated above. The investigator must also advise the Board when this study is finished or discontinued by completing the enclosed Protocol Final Report form and returning it to the Institutional Review Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,

Mario Scalora, Ph.D.
Chair for the IRB
Appendix B

Letter of Permission to Conduct Research in the Jewish Community
September 29, 2009

To: University of Nebraska
   Internal Review Board

From: Rabbi Pesach Lerner, D.Adm.
      Executive Vice President
      National Council of Young Israel

RE: Professor Stephen J. Linenberger

I have been asked by Professor Stephen Linenberger to comment on and acknowledge his conducting research for his dissertation within the Orthodox Jewish community.

Allow me to first introduce the Professor Linenberger that my community has come to know and respect. Stephen is the program coordinator and instructor of the Masters in Educational Leadership program, a joint endeavor of Bellevue University and the National Council of Young Israel.

The program is now in its fifth cycle, and Stephen has proven to be a master instructor, an articulate teacher, and a caring and concerned friend to all his students. He has shown utmost respect and sensitivity to the Orthodox Jewish community and our customs. We have learned from him and I believe he has learned from us. He is often invited to our family life-cycle events. Stephen has earned our admiration and has gained a wonderful reputation within our community.

With regard to his research: We are honored that Professor Linenberger has chosen to research “Altruism” within the Orthodox Jewish community. From an early age, our children are taught that one of the pillars of the world is “gemilat chasadim” — doing good deeds. I am sure his research will reflect the results of our education and lifestyle.

In closing, I am aware of his research project and I wholeheartedly approve of his using our community. I am volunteering to be interviewed and to introduce Professor Linenberger to other individuals within the Orthodox Jewish community.

If I can be of additional assistance, please do call upon me.

Thank you.

Legacy... Community... Family...

SHLOMO Z. MOSTOFSKY, ESQ., President
RABBI PESACH LERNER, Executive Vice President
Appendix C

Interview Protocol
Demographic Information

Age

Gender

Family Composition

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

- Do you remember a time, when you were younger, that you felt concern for another person? Probe: Please tell me about that incident.

- Can you recall a time when parent or other adult rewarded you for helping someone or punished for not helping someone? Probe: Please describe what happened in both cases – how were you rewarded or punished?

- Have your parents or other adults ever explained why you should help others in need? Probe: Please tell me what you remember from that (those) conversation(s).

- What thoughts or feelings do you have about those who deserve to be helped (or not helped). Probe: Please explain.

- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like you wanted to help someone but were afraid you would be going against ‘the rules’ (get into trouble) if you helped that person? Probe: How did you handle that situation?

- Can you remember a time when you gave your time freely to help someone? Probe: Please describe what happened.

- Can you remember a time when your collected money for a charity? Probe: Tell be about the charity organization and why you were interested in helping collect funds for it.
• Can you remember a time when you gave money to charity? Probe: Please describe your interest in that charity organization?

• What person in your life has had the biggest impact on you? Probe: Please tell me more about this person and how they have influenced you.

• Who do you admire most? Probe: Tell me about this person and why you admire them.

• Have you ever heard stories or parable about helping others? Probe: Can you tell me about the story and who told it to you?

  Have you ever seen someone help a person in need? Probe: Describe the situation. Who was involved in the situation? How did you feel when you saw this taking place?
Appendix D

Informed Consent Form
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
IRB#: 10304
Culture Antecedents of Altruism in the Orthodox Jewish Community

Purpose of the Research:
The purpose of this study is to discover the antecedents or preconditions that lead to altruism in the Orthodox Jewish Community.

Procedures:
Selected participants in this study will take part in semi-structured, audio taped interviews, with follow-up interviews if necessary. The interviews will consist of questions to help me gain a better understanding of the process by which one comes to understand altruism and how altruism is taught and promoted within the Orthodox Jewish culture. In conjunction with the interviews, each participant will be asked to share personal stories or anecdotes about altruistic acts that they have witnessed or participated in and also discuss Jewish teaching regarding altruism. The study, in its entirety will last until October 25, 2010. The amount of time required by the participant will be the time it takes to participate in the semi-structured interviews (approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour each).

Risks and Discomforts:
There are no known risks or discomforts involved in participating in this study.

Benefits:
Participants might gain a deeper understanding and benefits of altruism within their own community. Another benefit is that participants will take part in a unique and original study that documents one positive aspect of the Orthodox Jewish community.

Please initial to indicate you have read the first page

Page 1 of 2
Confidentiality:
To maintain confidentiality of those participants involved, the researcher will change the
names of participants in the final draft of the study to protect the identity and privacy of all
who participate in the study. All data collected is subject to use for publication, specifically, a
doctoral dissertation. All collected data including transcriptions, journals and personal
documents will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the Primary Investigator’s home. The
audio tapes will be destroyed immediately following the transcription, the journals and
personal documents will be destroyed immediately following the conclusion of the study and
the typed transcripts will be kept for 5 years and will be easily accessible in the event of an
audit. At the end of the 5 year period, all data collected will be destroyed via shredder.

Opportunity for Questions:
If you have any questions concerning your rights as a research subject that have not been
answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the
University of Nebraska at Lincoln Institutional Review Board at 402-472-6965. If you have
questions at any time, you may contact the investigators at the numbers listed below.

Freedom to Withdraw:
Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free not to participate in this research without
adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska-
Lincoln, or your institution. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you
are otherwise entitled.

Consent:
You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study.
Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the
information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

____ Check if you agree to be audio taped during the interview.

__________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of Participant                        Date

Stephen J. Linenberger, Primary Investigator
402-980-4360

Dr. Daniel Wheeler, Advisor
402-570-6126
Appendix E

Parental Informed Consent Form
PARENTAL INFORMED CONSENT FORM
IRB#: 10304
Culture Antecedents of Altruism in the Orthodox Jewish Community

You are invited to permit your child to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to allow your child to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Your child is eligible to participate in this study because your child is a member of an Orthodox Jewish family and is under the age of 18. Your child will also be asked if he/she is willing to participate.

The purpose of this study is to discover the antecedents or preconditions that lead to altruism in the Orthodox Jewish Community.

This study will take approximately one hour of your child’s time. You child will be interviewed on audio tape in your presence at a location that is comfortable for you and your child. The interview will consist of questions to help me gain a better understanding of the process by which one comes to understand altruism and, specifically, how altruism is taught and promoted within the Orthodox Jewish community. In conjunction with the interviews, your child will be asked age appropriate questions regarding acts of kindness and to share personal stories or anecdotes about altruistic acts that they have witnessed or participated in.

There are no known risks associated with this research.

As a result of participation in this research, it is possible that your child may learn more about altruism.

Any information obtained during this study which could identify your child will be kept strictly confidential. The audiotapes will be kept in a locked file in the investigator’s office for 5 years and then will be erased. The information obtained in this study may be published in relevant journals or presented at academic conferences, but your child’s identity will be kept strictly confidential.

Your child’s rights as a research participant have been explained to you. You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. Or you may call the investigator at any time, cell phone, (402) 9804360, office phone (402) 557.7709.

Please contact the investigator:
- if you want to voice concerns or complaints about the research
- in the event of a research related injury
Please contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at (402) 472-6965 for the following reasons:

- you wish to talk to someone other than the research staff to obtain answers to
- questions about your rights as a research participant
- to voice concerns or complaints about the research
- to provide input concerning the research process
- in the event the study staff could not be reached

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide to not let your child participate in this study. You can refuse to participate or withdraw your child at any time without harming their or your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, (or other institutions or organizations), or in any other way receive a penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT

YOU ARE VOLUNTARILY MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE CERTIFIES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE HAVING READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE INFORMATION PRESENTED. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP.

______________________________
Child’s Name

______________________________  ______________________________
Signature of Parent               Date

IN MY JUDGEMENT THE PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN IS VOLUNTARILY AND KNOWINGLY GIVING INFORMED CONSENT AND POSSESES THE LEGAL CAPACITY TO GIVE INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY.

______________________________  ______________________________
Signature of Investigator          Date

Stephen J. Linenberger, Primary Investigator
402-980-4360

Dr. Daniel Wheeler, Advisor
402-570-6126
Appendix F

Child Assent Form
CHILD ASSENT FORM
IRB # 10304
Culture Antecedents of Altruism in the Orthodox Jewish Community

We would like to invite you to take part in this study. We are asking you because you are member of an Orthodox Jewish family. In this study, we will try to understand how you learn about acts of kindness. You will be asked some questions about acts of kindness or, being nice to other people when they need help. Everything we talk about during the interview will be recorded on a tape recorder. At least one of your parents will be with you during the interview and you and your parent(s) may ask me questions at any time.

Your parents will also be asked to give their permission for you to take part in this study. Please talk this over with your parents before you decide or not to participate.

There is no risk to you in this study. You may even learn more about acts of kindness as a result of your participation.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you decide to be in the study, you can stop at any time.

Once again, if you have any questions at any time, please ask.

IF YOU SIGN THIS FORM IT MEANS THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE AND YOU OR YOUR PARENTS HAVE READ EVERYTHING THAT IS ON THIS FORM.

YOU AND YOUR PARENTS WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP.

Signature of Subject                              Date

Signature of Investigator                        Date

Stephen J. Linenberger, Primary Investigator
402-980-4360

Dr. Daniel Wheeler, Advisor
402-570-6126
Appendix G

Transcriptionist Confidentiality Form
Identification of Project:
Culture Antecedents of Altruism in the Orthodox Jewish Community

Purpose of the Research:
The purpose of this study is to discover the antecedents or preconditions associated with altruism.
Multiple interviews will be conducted with ten women who hold positions in student affairs.

Procedures:
Participants in this study will take part in semi-structured, audio taped interviews. The interviews will consist of questions to help the researcher gain a better understanding as to how that participant describes her own career path and the factors that have influenced her career choices, and should each last approximately an hour. Each interview will be transcribed by a hired transcriptionist. The study, in its entirety will last until March 1, 2010; the amount of time required by the transcriptionist will be the amount of time it takes to transcribe all of the audio taped interviews.

Statement of Confidentiality:
Any communication, written or oral, is prohibited outside of this research project. The transcriptionist and the primary researcher may discuss the interviews and the process, as it pertains to the validity of the transcriptions. The basis of this statement of confidentiality agreement serves as confidential protection for the participants of the study as well as for the researcher.

Having been notified of this confidentiality statement and fully understanding it, I agree that any violation of this policy is my responsibility and can be grounds for dismissal from my position and realize that the agreed upon payment contract will become null and void.

I further agree that when my contract is finished, no information concerning this study is to be communicated, written or orally, to any other party. I also agree not to reveal any information concerning the participants to anyone besides the primary researcher for this study.

_______________________________________________
Signature of Transcriptionist                Date

Stephen J. Linenberger, Primary Investigator
402-980.4360

Dr. Daniel Wheeler, Advisor
402-570-6126
Appendix H

Transcriptionist Contract Form
This agreement entered into on (DATE) ____________________, by and between the 
Transcriptionist, known as: ____________________________, whose telephone number is 
________________.

And the Professional client _____________________________, whose telephone number is 
________________.

Whereas Transcriptionist desires to contract with the Professional client to perform said work
and/or service, and,

Whereas the parties desire to set forth their contractual and business arrangements,

Therefore, this agreement constitutes the said contractual and business arrangements, and the
parities contract and agree as follows:

The Transcriptionist agrees to perform, abide by and follow the stipulations listed in the
remainer of this contract.

**EQUIPMENT**

The transcriptionist is responsible for providing all equipment and supplies necessary for any
work done, other than supplies given by the professional client (i.e. audio tapes containing taped
interviews). These supplies provided by the transcriptionist, but not limited to, office equipment
(i.e. typewriter, computer, transcription equipment, etc.) paper, dictionaries and manuals, tools,
etc. The transcriptionist is also responsible for all repairs on her own equipment.

Any supplies given by the Professional client to the Transcriptionist (audio tapes) must be
returned to the Professional client as soon as the tape has been transcribed, or final payment of
any payment due will be withheld until said items are returned.

**PRICING AND PAYMENT**

Payment for services rendered is on when the typed transcription and the audio tapes are returned
to the Professional client. Set turnaround time is about one week per interview. It is understood
that the submission of dictation from multiple days at one time may require a longer turnaround
time and that the established rate of pay is $1.25 per minute of audio tape.

_________________________________________  ____________________
Signature of Professional Client                  Date

_________________________________________  ____________________
Signature of Transcriptionist                    Date
Appendix I

Sample Recorded Interview
This is ------, on October 25, 2009.

So, I explained to you the purpose of the study, and, so, I’m going to ask you some pretty open ended questions, and I don’t really have a script or anything I’m going to stick to. I just have some starting points and follow up questions if I need them, but I’ll just start by asking about, maybe, early on in your life, can you remember like maybe the first time or generally, when you were first exposed to the idea of doing an altruistic deed, or in Jewish terms, a mitzvah, or, I don’t know what the

The word mitzvah is based on the word _tzav_ which means to command. A mitzvah is a commandment. It’s through slang it’s become a good deed. But it’s really not a good deed.

**You mean not necessarily a good deed.**

It can be a good deed, but it means a commandment. A mitzvah is a commandment. It’s a very common misidentification for a lot of people. Cause you say, do a mitzvah, you know.

**As you practiced orthodox Judaism, how did you** –

I wasn’t brought up practicing orthodox Judaism. I didn’t start practicing orthodox Judaism till I was maybe 30, 31 years old.

Yeah. But I was brought up in a Jewish house, that really had, very very assimilated house. And charity was certainly always a part of our family. My father helped out one of his brothers tremendously, but like a few brothers, really. Helped them get work, helped them, I had one uncle who graduated law school during the Depression, he couldn’t get a job, and then he gave him a business. So there was always that aspect of family helping out, people helping.

And I never thought anything of it because it was just the way I was brought up. I do remember, I was thinking about it before, when I knew that you were coming and you were going to ask me some questions, that I do remember the time when I was living in the east village, and when I was thinking. I used to think in those days. About what we said before, about, is there really any such thing as a true altruistic act, or is it, I mean, anything that I think of that I can do to help somebody, or do something, I’m doing it because it makes me feel good.

I mean, yes, I’m helping that person. But I want to help that person. I want to help him. And, I mean it’s just like an automatic reflex. I don’t think oh this is going to make me feel good so I’m going to help this person. But I noticed after I did certain things to help somebody, I saw that it made me feel good. And that it was a motivator.

I remember once realizing one time, you know in those days we were all scuffling, I used to work in film, as I told you, we did work freelance, and there were times when we go a couple of months without work. And I didn’t have money. I just scraped by, paid the rent. And I noticed one time I didn’t have money, and I was with a friend of mine, we went into a supermarket, and he bought the food. And I was uncomfortable. And I realized at that time how much more I liked it when I could buy the food for somebody else, than I was the recipient on the end of an altruistic act.

It was a much more, alright, so. Um. I don’t know really what else to say on the subject. **But that’s kind of how, that you’re describing how you became aware of altruism, and how it affected you when you were involved in an altruistic act with someone.** Yeh, I may not have even known the world altruism, at that point. But doing good for others.
Okay.
A person always has a choice. I mean, whether to help somebody or not help somebody. Sometimes, I mean I’m in a helping profession today. I work as a, I’m a substance abuse counselor but I don’t do that, I run a prevention program, where we work with high risk kids. Kids who, because of certain behavior patterns or disabilities or family situations they could at some point later on in life, they are high risk for drug use.
So, I mean, that’s something that, it’s a helping profession. Again, it’s not something that I go out of my way, or went out of my way to say, I want to do this because I want to help people. You know, I got a call to start this program from somebody who hired me to do it, and that’s how I did it.
But it certainly is rewarding, when one time I was standing outside of the synagogue on a holiday, and a guy comes up to me who didn’t even recognize and he said, oh, how are you, happy new year. It was Rosh Hashanah. I just want to thank you again, you saved my life.
I didn’t ever remember the guy. I sent him to a rehab and helped get him processed for Medicaid and whatever had to happen.
So that’s a rewarding thing. And then you feel good, when you know that you’ve helped someone.
Again, whether that has anything to do with altruism, depending on how we define altruism.
Very good.
Could you tell me a little bit about the feelings or thoughts you have about the actual person that you’re helping? I mean, is there a certain point at which, that you identify, you know, with people who need help, or, can you talk a little bit about that process.
That’s a very interesting question. Because I’ve noticed, with people who do help people, some of them do it because it makes them feel powerful, in a way. And I see, in their relating to the people, that they look down on the people.
In a certain way. Not intentionally, but just, I’m helping you, you know, you’re the screwed up one and I’m the professional, and I’m helping you.
Because I can.
Yes. So, and my wife, who works also in a helping profession, she’s a case worker for an organization that deals with developmentally delayed people. She’s very involved in person-centered therapy and person-centered planning. So, no matter how delayed a person may be, they get the person involved in the decisions that are going to affect their lives. And they’re very conscious of looking at that person as a person, not just an object that I have to, you know I have to put them here and do this for them and do that. And I find this very difficult to do if you’re not, you have to be conscious of it all the time, because when somebody comes to you, especially when you’re dealing with an addict, who you know is going to come in and lie, and depending, especially if his parents bring him there, or bring her there, because they want them to stop using drugs.
You have to really be on top of it and on top of yourself to know that you’re dealing with a person, so you want to stop using drugs. Do you want to stop using drugs? Well, not really.
I say, so what are you doing here? What did you come to me for?
You want to make the decision, it’s your life. You can make that decision. If you want to continue using drugs, continue using drugs. I’m not in the position of a school teacher or a parent or, say you bad boy, stop doing this. Because it’s not evil behavior. You’re not hurting anybody. You may be hurting people besides yourself, but you’re doing it because of their involvement with you. I mean, if you’re not stealing and you’re not hurting, physically hurting anybody else, so, but that’s something that you have to really constantly be on top of because very often you find yourself getting in the position where you’re the school master, and this is the student that you’re spanking.

Right.
So, I mean, that’s what I have noticed about being in a position where you’re helping people. And I say helping in quotes, because –

Right.
Sometimes you can do more harm than good, God forbid, as you know.

You know. And there is a certain amount of calculation there, possibly, in maybe his case more,
I think also, that phrase, I think come about because when a person is helped, they’re resentful that they have to be in that position where they’re helped. And they have to take it out on someone, and so the helper is who, you know, what kind of nerve do you have helping me. Even though I’m coming to you for help, I’m crying out for help, so, somewhere, it’s probably an unconscious process, you know, where they hold it against the helper, that they needed that good deed done for them.

Right.
So therefore they try to get even in some sort of a way. So again, no good deed goes unpunished. It’s true.
My father, he should rest in peace, one of his favorite expressions was, there but for the grace of God go I. Which, if he, that’s person-centered planning.

Can you think of a time that you wanted to commit an altruistic act or do something, engage in helping behavior, but to do so would mean that you had to go against the rules, or you would have to break some sort of rules to do the kind act?
The law. See, Jewish law, I would like to think that I would never break to do a kind act. And that it would never be necessary to break it to do a kind act, because,

You’re allowed to break it sometimes?
Well then it’s not the law. That’s what I’m saying. It’s not the law.
If I see a person drowning on Shabbos, I’m allowed to run into the water even though I’m not allowed to go swimming on Shabbos, or go into a lake, but I’m allowed to go in and save them. If I see a person who needs to eat, or if I, God forbid, need to eat food that’s not permitted, or that’s not cooked yet, on Shabbos, to save a life, to save my life, or to save a, I’m allowed to cook that food, even though it’s against Jewish law to cook on Shabbos. But now it’s not against Jewish law, because the law says, to save a life you’re allowed to do it.
But yes, let me talk about situations in the abstract, and not with, because of course I’m not going to mention anybody’s names, but,
I’ll tell you another situation. There was a woman who was, her husband was a crackhead. And he was beating her up, and beating up her nine year old son, and she ran to us for help, and we set up a place for her to run with the kid, out of the state, to go and
hide from this maniac who she was married to. Of course she came back to him after a few months, because that’s the classic abused wife syndrome, you know. So there are situations where you’re doing an altruistic act and it’s illegal. But it’s, you’re doing it to help people and it’s got to be done. I mean, there’s no, what are you going to do? Throw her back to the guy?

Right. Okay.

*Can you think of a specific one or two exemplars or role models, when you were younger, or even as you grew older, that really had an impact on you?*

Yes.

*And who is that?*

That’s the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Okay.

*I’m sorry, you know what, and what was his name, or is his name?*

Was his name. Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Okay.

There have been a number of Lubavitcher Rebbes. There have been, I believe, seven. … yes, he’s the seventh.

I’ve had other people who’ve, role models now for what?

*Like that promoted altruistic acts, or helping behavior.*

My father.

Okay.

*Can you tell me a little bit about your father? What did he do, and in what ways did he —*

Well as I said before, he helped his family tremendously. He was a young man—He helped his family members who ran into trouble. He would always, he gave money, gave charity, and he helped people, anybody that was down that would come to him for help, he would help them. He was in some kind of a, he was trying to sell insurance at one point, and he didn’t want to go into the family business, but my grandmother called him up one day and she said, because my grandfather was, who knew where he was, he was all over the place. And he would sometimes just not go to work for four five days, you know, he would disappear, nobody knew where he was. He had a glass eye, my grandfather, he lost an eye in a fireworks, in a Fourth of July, when he was playing with fireworks when he was a kid. One day he calls up my father, but at that point my father was in the store, Oh, so my grandmother had called him and said, Jack you have to come in to help me in the store today. And eventually he had to leave the job that he really wanted to do, to go into the business. At least this is the way I heard the story from him, you know. And he did it because his mother wanted him to. He was very very respectful of his mother. Very much so.

And that story about my grandfather, was he called up one morning and he said, I can’t find my eye. I don’t know when I’m coming in, I can’t find my eye.

My grandfather was a guy who used to wake up in the morning and he’d take a cup and he’d fill it halfway up with milk, and then halfway up with whatever his hand rested on. Scotch, bourbon, you know. That was his breakfast.

So, that’s where he found his eye, it was at the bottom of the cup.

Family stories, you know, that you hear growing up.
Absolutely.
So anyway, he was a helpful guy. He was a nice guy. He helped people. And I grew up seeing that.
And another friend, I have another friend, a person who is very influential in my life. His name is Joffen, Zalman Joffen. He was from a yeshiva background, very strong yeshiva background. Not Chasidic, but, that’s his father.
But he was an artist, an abstract artist, and an underground film maker. And he was a person that, he literally saved lives, saves people’s lives. Because the crowds that we were hanging around in in those days, in the village, there was a lot of stuff going on.
Stuff that I really just couldn’t even begin to go into it, because, there were people, innocent people, that would come in to that scene, and they didn’t know, people didn’t know what was, there was evil there. Real evil. And people were not aware that it was evil. And they weren’t aware that, I mean, everybody wanted to do what was hip. That was really, you know, and kids who came in there, they just got sucked in my this stuff. And Zalman was a person who literally saved people. I mean, he just, he was a person that I, I really came to this neighborhood not for Lubavitch, but because he lives here.
Really.
Yes, I worked with him on a few films, because I was in the film industry, but he was an underground, he was an artist, an underground film maker.
That’s his collage in the living room over there, the big collage against the wall. That’s totally abstract stuff.
But, I really can’t go into specific instances, I can’t think offhand of any specific instances. I can tell you that people have told me, Zalman saved my life.
So he would help people see what was real.
So those are really the three,
And that was your father, your friend, and who’s the third one?
And the Rebbe.
Of course. Okay.
I mean, you know, you learn from everybody. The Torah says you can learn from everybody. And you do learn from everybody.
But these are people that I would say were role models, people that had a tremendous influence on me, directly.
Okay.
I mean it says, the Latin term is what, Imitation Dio, you know, that you’re supposed to emulate God. You’re supposed to act like God.
So it says, how can you act like God, what does it mean? Just like God clothes the naked and God feeds the sick, and God buries the dead. So you also have to do all of those things. That’s what it means, to act like God. Ever heard that term, Imitatio Dio? It’s a Latin term,
Well, I should have known it.
I think it comes from the secular world. Because why would the Jews use Latin? You know.
I have just a couple of final questions here. Tell me about charity in your community and your experience with charity. How does it work, why is it promoted, how frequent, just if you would talk about the process of charity, in your experience, in the community.

I’m laughing because of a joke that I heard recently.

Can we hear it?

Yes. First of all you have to understand that in a community like this, people come to town and Boro Park also, people raising money for yeshivas, and people who raising money for this one and this one has a sick this and that one has a, you know, everybody’s got, you know. And so the door is rung a number of times every week. People come, and, Every day.

Yes. Especially these months now, when there were so many thousands of people here for the holidays. Now they’ve gone back, but, so the joke was that the Catholic priest knocks on the rabbi’s door one day. And says, rabbi, rabbi you got to help me. So what is it? He says, they’re robbing our houses in our community. There are people coming in and robbing, we’re getting a lot of theft in our community. And I notice that you Jews, you don’t have a lot of theft. What is it? So the rabbi says, well we have a commandment that tells us that we should put mezuzahs on our doors, and that gives protection.

You know what a mezuzah is?

Yes.

Well they protect even non-Jews, by the way.

Really?

Yes. I’ll tell you a story about that, yes.

Fascinating.

So the rabbi said, can I get some from you. I mean, the priest said, can I get some from you. so he says, yes of course. And the rabbi comes out and he brings him a whole bunch of mezuzahs. And the priest goes back, gives them to the people in his community, they put up the mezuzahs on the outside doors. A month later, pounding on the rabbi’s door again. Rabbi, rabbi, rabbi, you got to help me, you got to help me. The rabbi came to the door and he says, what is it, they’re still robbing your houses? He says no no no. But what is it? He says, fundraisers. Take the mezuzahs back.

That’s wonderful.

But you just asked me something else.

Community charity.

Yes, community charity.

Okay. So here in this community, first of all you have the yeshivas, because whatever they charge tuition is not enough to cover their expenses. And people here still have to pay state tax, even though we don’t send our kids to public school, we have to pay city and state tax. They’ve tried to institute some kind of voucher system, so people can go to, So we have the yeshivas to support, people come around and then we get letters mailed. And we have other organizations. The organization that I work for, well they also have a yeshiva and they have a summer camp and they have what they call the release time program, is which was instituted actually by the Catholic church a number of years ago, maybe sixty years ago, I don’t know if you’re familiar with the program. They go into
public schools. They decided, the government, they brought the case but a child is entitled to an hour of religious training a week in the public school if they want it. So we have people, the organization that I work for, they have this release time program where they go, they send people out to the public schools, and kids sign up, and they go out there once a week, and they teach the kids Judaism. That program.

And we have a poor and sick fund. And we have toys for hospitalized children, where they bring them around Chanukah time they bring toys, and Christmas time for the non-Jewish kids, they bring toys into the hospitals for kids. So you have programs like that.

Then you have, these other charity. Kollel Chabad, which is an Israeli, it’s stationed here, but they help the families in Israel. You know there’s no end to charity. There’s so many people that need so much.

And, so you have all these different organizations within the community. Plus you have individuals. You have an organization here called Simchas Shabbos V’Yom Tov, which is a place that gives out food for Shabbos and for the holidays. They will bring a carton of food to somebody’s house. Chicken and vegetables and fruit and whatever else. They have, the week before Passover, they had a truck that went in front of the main shul there at 770, and unloaded cartons and cartons of fruits and vegetables. And people could just come and take whatever they needed.

And you have individuals that donate, and you have, and then here you have also the shluchim system, which we have, Lubavitch has shluchim. A shaliach is, the literal translation is probably a messenger.

*Emissary, no?*

Well, maybe emissary might be better, yeah.

It’s a person who has the power of the sender within him. For instance, if I want to get married, and I can’t make it to the wedding canopy that day, because I’m stuck someplace, I will make a shaliach. And he will go to the wedding canopy with the ring, and he will go stand under the chupah, the canopy, and he will say the words, I betroth you to me under the laws of Moses and Israel, and put the ring on her finger, and I’m married to her. Because he has that power of mine, so here we have the shluchim from the Rebbe. People who are all over the world. And they have Chabad houses. I’m sure you heard about the one in Mumbai last year.

So that was a Chabad house, they were shluchim.

**Right.**

And what they do is they open up the house to Jews who come in and need kosher food. And need, whatever their religious needs may be. They try to form schools for the kids. And they also need, now usually, they’re on their own, I mean as far as raising money is concerned. And they try to raise money, they don’t go out to a community, generally, unless they know there are certain people that are going to support them.

So, but here you have organizations, the main organization that sends them out with maybe a stipend the first year.

You have organizations here, you have Bikur Cholim, which is visiting the sick. You have Ahavas Chesed, which is another, loving kindness is what it means, the translation. They also do work with the sick. They have blood drives, and they help people get into hospitals, and they, so you have a tremendous amount of charities in the community, that do this stuff.
And they’re all individual. You know, people will call me and say, they’ll want me to help them. Now I’m in the business anyway, to help them, they don’t have to, you know, and they say, I give you a lot of money. I never met you, you know, you give me a lot of money.
Appendix J

Sample Phone Interview
Hi ---- Thanks for agreeing to speak with me about altruism and calling in the Orthodox Jewish community. As you know, I have conducted several semi-structured interviews that touched on some specific aspects of altruism and calling in your community. However, after conducting only 12 interviews, I found great consistency in the responses to my questions from participants of different ages and who adhere to slightly different Jewish ideologies (Ultra-Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Hassidic, Labavitch, etc.). Therefore, I would appreciate your comments on why you believe the responses to my original questions were so consistent. That is, how is altruism and calling instilled in your community as a whole?

For me it would seem difficult to realize these two points from the perspective of a researcher looking in from the outside, while they are more readily apparent to an insider looking out.

The first idea is that while studying the behavioral patterns of the (Orthodox) Jew, in which ways he is similar to the world at large and in which ways he is unique and different, it is important to not miss the figurative forest in the careful analyses of the trees. EVERYTHING a Jew does (when he is living his life properly, as a Jew is expected to live) is done for one reason, and that is that G-d told him to do it. Through a carefully transmitted tradition, both oral and recorded, the Torah and its commandments that G-d gave our fathers millennia ago remain vibrantly alive today. It is easy to explain some of the commandments as being “the nice thing to do” (such as don't steal, murder, or commit adultery) but that would really be missing the essence of being a Jew. A Jew dresses modestly because G-d told us to. A Jew only eats Kosher because that was G-d's command. A Jew wears phylacteries and strings on the corners of four cornered garments because that is what G-d told him to do.

Likewise, Jews give charity because that is what they were commanded to do. Jews help out others when the help is needed because G-d told us to. We can try to understand the rationale behind G-d's commandments, but at the same time we must realize the futility of a finite mortal trying to define G-d in finite mortal terms. A concept or idea which seems right to us because of our unbelievably myopic view of creation and of its creatures may or may not be logical in the G-dly view of the world, but it would be small and foolish of us to assume that it is. For many of the commandments we are told the reason why they are expected of us, but for some of the commandments we are specifically told that we are not to know their reason. This by no means lessens the value or importance of those commandments, and on the contrary, observing them is perhaps a better display of our love for G-d. So, when trying to understand why Jews show such an impressive level of altruistic behavior compared to the world at large, I think the answer may be that it is for the same reason that Jews pray three times a day, keep the Sabbath, circumcise their sons, and so on- because we were commanded to by G-d.

A corollary of this concept is that it becomes ingrained in our nature that charitable acts are praiseworthy and expected. I suppose that all good, well meaning people agree that this type of behavior will better the world, but when one becomes accustomed to acting on this belief it becomes easier to live by it. Also, when the arbiter of what is good and what is bad is G-d Himself, it becomes more compelling to commit
oneself to doing those extra good deeds. This leads to a culture of selfless giving, even in situations where we may not be commanded by the letter of the law to give. The spirit of the law lives strong inside us.

To a certain degree, this type of lifestyle snowballs into people becoming even more giving by nature. When a child grows up observing his parents giving charity to every collector who knocks at the door, he is taught by example that this is the way to live. The very fact that so many Jews are able to go door to door collecting for themselves or their cause reflects this attitude towards giving.

The second idea is a reason why there is such a high level of kindness done among Jews for other Jews in need. This idea is that there exists between every Jew a bond that is eternally strong. One Jew views another as a relative, in real terms. The feeling is not an intellectual understanding that we share a common goal. That may be part of it, but the emotional connection that exists goes well beyond that. Jews view each other as all being part of a large extended family. For example, picture yourself reading the newspaper at the breakfast table, and reading about a large plane crash in which hundreds are killed. A typical reaction would be one of sympathy for the victims' families and a moment of sorrow. However, life goes on. One would return to drinking his coffee and enjoying his muffin as he turns the page to see what else has happened in the world. However, if one were to notice that one or more of the victims was a relative, the reaction would be completely different. If it was me, my mouth would go dry, the coffee would become bitter and the muffin would become completely forgotten. The breakfast would be ruined. For the typical Orthodox Jew, hearing that a Jew was one of the victims would have a similar effect. A bombing in Iraq is terrible, but a bombing in Israel would literally ruin the day of Jews worldwide. The moment of sorrow becomes much more prolonged and much more pronounced. This feeling is difficult to explain but impossible to fake. When someone comes and asks for charity, imagine how you would feel if you were told that the person has just lost a son, for example. If that information doesn't move you, then it wouldn't really be expected of you to give of yourself for him. But if any Jew asks me for charity, how can I turn him down if his tragedy and my sorrow are so intertwined? If I really feel of him as a brother, and would cry over his loss as I would cry over that of a relative, why should it be surprising that I will give to him?

Again, this feeling is quite difficult to explain, but it is extremely real. It may not be a typical emotion found in every religion or nation, but every Jew instinctively feels it. It is completely commonplace for Jews to gather in prayer for the needs of other Jews or communities, and no one feels like they are being imposed upon. When we pray for peace in Israel, it is not a political hope; it is a desperate plea that our brothers are kept out of harms' way, much the same way that a parent would pray for a child on the front lines of a battlefield.

This close bond is taught to us by the Torah, but I would suppose that it has been strengthened by thousands of years of anti-Semitism and persecution. We are experiencing a 2000 year long exile and most of those 2000 years have been painful ones for the Jewish people. It often seems that the entire world is out to get us, and if we don't stand up for each other, no one will stand up for us at all. Thank G-d, America has been
very good to the Jewish people. However, life in Europe, any Moslem country, most of Asia, and pretty much anywhere in the world during these millennia can hardly be called living. Even recently, did any countries want the surviving Jews after the Holocaust? Has any country ever wanted a Jew, if not for financial gain? Even in the United States, the Jewish hospitals in New York City and around the country were built out of necessity when Jews weren’t allowed into the other hospitals. In the year 2010, I have still had eggs and curses thrown at me as I walk the streets in my Jewish garb. In this type of life, a cultural bond is formed that is unbreakably strong. The feeling is transplanted into the Jew instinctively, almost from his mother’s milk. All Jews are one family, and care for each other as relatives would.

When viewed in this light, the altruistic tendencies that abound in the Jewish community are both a beautiful, refreshing display of the behaviors of a G-dly people and also the expected norm of a united community.

I hope that this helps you in your research and findings. These ideas are my personal thoughts, but I assume that most Orthodox Jews would readily agree with them.
Appendix K

Example of Memo from Axial Coding State
March 18, 2010

**Empathy: Replaced by a Sense of Justice and Righteousness**

The decision to help is not based on viewing others as helpless. Reflections on how the helper feels about the one being helped minimize the role of empathy in the decision to help others. Thus, in the Orthodox Community (OC), the decision to help is based more on notions of **righteousness** and **justice**.

Low Empathy

Righteousness

Justice

Decisions to help are not based on viewing others as helpless. Likewise, the person being helped must be viewed as a person, and not an (instrumental) object. Jews believe that one should help others because it is the right thing to do and it is good in its own right (RIGHTeousness).

One should help another for the sake of the commandment itself. It is an unspoken rule that one should help another person. It is a privilege to be sent to perform Chesed in other areas of the community – helping those you are not familiar with.

Empathic responses seem to be grounded in a sense of JUSTICE. One child who was interviewed commented, “I feel pain when I see people on the street who need help”. Another child stated, “I hope this [act] really helps them”. When asked how they felt about those being helped, an adult respondent stated, “It’s supposed to be done that way”.

“Chesed is an ingredient in mother’s milk”. It becomes part of who you are without ever knowing it. “We are products of our house.” Chesed is engrained in us from the beginning. The DNA of the Jewish people is to lead/shepherd others and to emulate G-d.

To perform an altruistic for another means that one believes in the potential of others.
Table 1

*Coding Table*

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