



## Kontakt

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## Einladung

zum Gastvortrag

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## Is this the other within me: Learning about one's own and the other's religion

How do Jewish and Muslim adolescents react to learning about  
the other (seemingly hostile) religion?

**Freitag, 06. März 2020, 14:00 Uhr**

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# Is this the other within me: Learning about one's own and the other's religion

How do Jewish and Muslim adolescents react to learning about the other (seemingly hostile) religion?

Religion affiliation and the arousal of religious sensibilities are assumed predictors of intergroup prejudice and conflict. Thus, exposure to the other's religious principles and symbols could arouse defensive reactions, such as sense of threat, stereotypes and rejection. However, what would happen when learners discover commonalities between their own and the other's religion or learn about historical inter-relations between adherents of both faith? Would acquaintance with the other religion have disruptive effects or would it facilitate a sense of shared identity and stereotype reduction.

Our research project begins with tracing the effects of learning about the history of Islam and about Jewish-Muslim cultural relationships on Jewish middle school students' anti Muslim prejudice. Working both within a European "clash of culture" framing (Crusades), and from a Middle Eastern intercultural influence perspective (Jews of Islam). It then goes on to present the effects of a similar intervention on Muslim students' attitudes towards Jews. Findings showed a significant positive effect of studying about similarities of Judaism and Islam and Jewish-Muslim relations on Jewish students' stereotypes and historical perceptions. Learning about Islam had a significantly higher positive effect on right wing conservative Jewish students. However, a pilot study among Muslim seventh grade students showed that by comparison, studying Jewish-Muslim religious commonalities and treatment of minorities had no effect or a negative one on Muslim students' attitudes towards Judaism and Jews. How can we explain these effects? Does finding the other within me affirm or threaten me?

Relying on intercultural education and social identity theories, we discuss the affirmative effect that studying about inter-religious relations may have on Jewish and Muslim adolescents, as well as the potential identity threat that may accompany the awareness of similarity and mutual influence. We outline the promise and problems that learning about inter-religious relations holds for multicultural education and a more tolerant society in the context of prolonged conflict.



**Dr. Tsafirir Goldberg** is a senior lecturer at the University of Haifa, Israel. His research focuses on the effects of learning and instruction in the humanities on students' identity and intergroup attitudes. He specializes in teaching and learning difficult histories and controversial

issues in Israel and in Europe. Dr. Goldberg is head of the B.A. and teacher education track in the department of Learning, Instruction and teacher education which serves a diverse population of Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Druze students and teachers.