“THE HEART OF ISLAM”

A Chancel Dialogue/conversation between:

Rev. Scott W. Alexander and Dr. Abdelouahid Souala

An interfaith opportunity to Learn about Islam, and explore some of the similarities and differences between Islam and Unitarian Universalism

Sunday, May 3, 2026

Unitarian Church North

Mequon, Wisconsin

Potential Questions/inquiries from Rev. Alexander for Dr. Souala to address (after Dr. Souala answers each question/inquiry Rev. Alexander will then engage Dr. Souala in conversation about Islam, and the ways it is both similar and different from our Unitarian

Universalist faith…with the goal of deepening interfaith understanding and dialogue)

1) A most warm welcome Dr. Souala, we are so glad you (and members of your religious community, the Islamic Society of Sheboygan) could join us this morning for this interfaith dialogue -- and lunch! To get us going this morning, please take a moment to briefly introduce yourself to us: sharing your prsonal/professional/cultural/family background, how you ended up in Sheboygan, and your role with the Islamic Society.
2) Although today, Islam and Unitarian Universalism are two very different and distinct religions (and I hope our dialogue this morning will make some of those distinctions – and similarities - clear) both our faith traditions have their roots in the ancient Abrahamic period: when Judaism,

Christianity, Islam and Bahai came into being. What to you is ***"The Heart and soul of Islam,"*** and what role does your faith as a Muslim play in your day-to-day life?

3) One central aspect of your faith, Sharia Law, is widely misunderstood (and maligned) by some in America…in a recent piece in the Washington Post, Muslim writer Shadi Hamid points that: ***"Islam shapes how its adherents think about family, sexuality, and what it means to live a good [and responsible] life. Sharia law*** [which is the religious, moral and legal code of Islam guides all aspects of live, worship, daily living, ethics, and social affairs.] ***and it includes guidelines for how to pray, fast, and otherwise observed what it means to submit to God in daily practice."*** So (as I understand it) to dismiss and denigrate

Sharia law is to dismiss and denigrate the very foundations of Muslim living and practice. Can you say more about this?

4) In one of the pamphlets explaining Islam you gave me it says, ***[THE FOLLOWING IS PROJECTED UP ON THE CHANCEL SCREEN FOR THE CONGRGATION TO SEE]*** ***"Worship, as understood by Muslims, is much more than ritual prayer. Serving one's fellow humans beings; doing good; abstaining from bad; and being kind, loving, generous and considerate are all forms of worship. Earning an honest living, being truthful even in the face of adversity is worship. Taking care of oneself, one's parents, siblings, the elderly, family and the community are all considered worship according to Islam."*** This is very much like our Unitarian Universalist approach to life and

ethics, Can you say more about this Islamic call to a loving, just and compassionate life?

5) One of the pamphlets you gave me says, ***[THE FOLLOWING IS PROJECTED UP ON THE CHANCEL SCREEN FOR THE CONGRGATION TO SEE]*** ***"Islam places great emphasis on social justice. It opposes all those who exploit, oppress o deal unjustly with people…Islam protects all noble values and human rights. Freedom, equality, justice and the right to life, liberty and security of persons are of prime concern in Islamic Law."*** This is also a central concern and duty of Unitarian Universalism. Say more about the role social justice (and compassion) play in Islam*?*

6) Can you briefly explain us more about ***"The Five Pillars of Islam,"*** and how

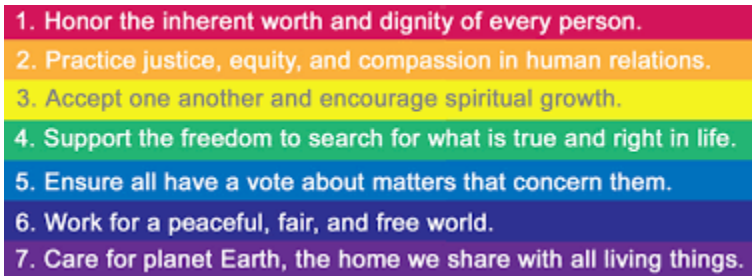
each one informs and shapes the life of a Muslim?

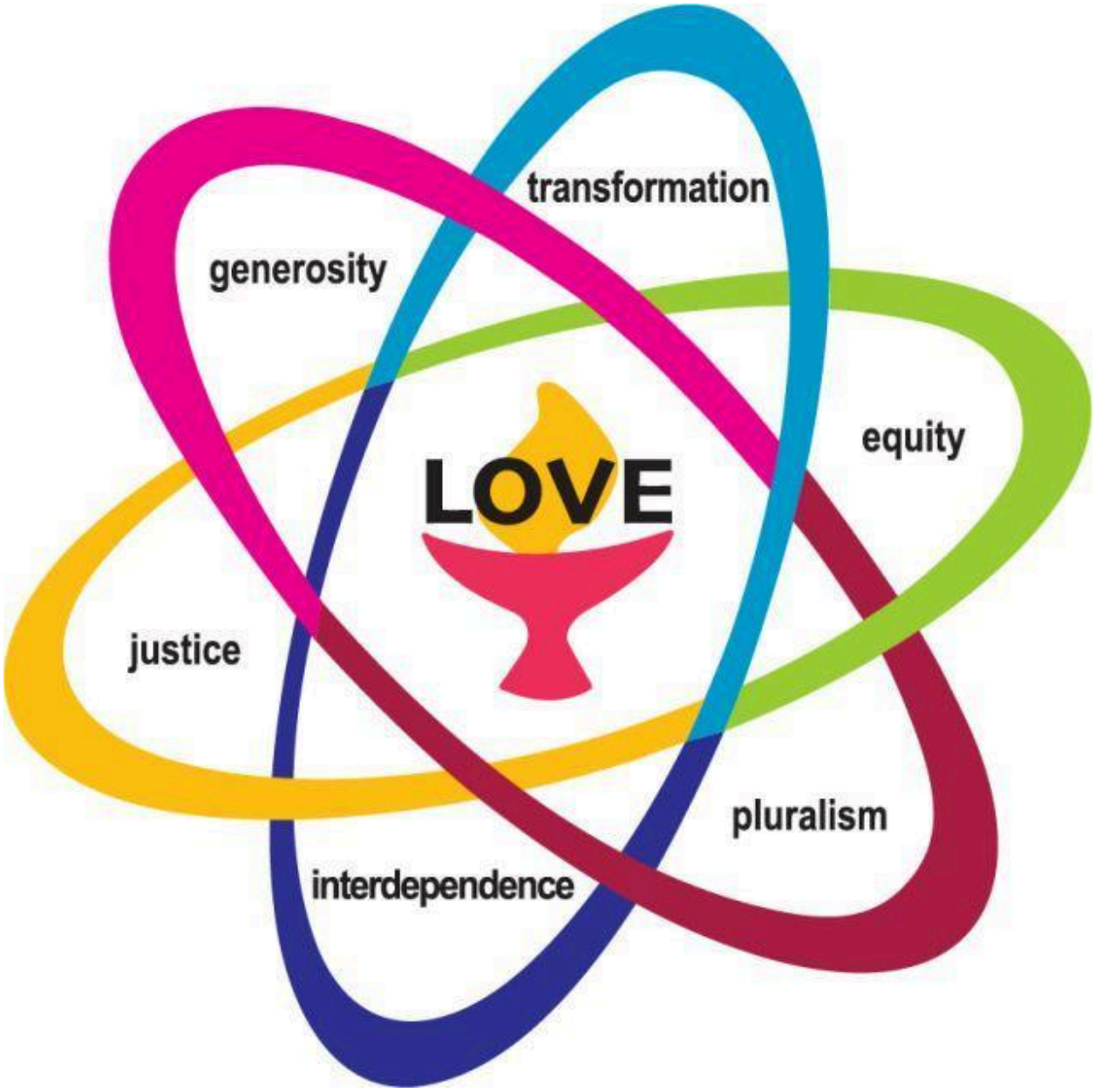
[THE GRAPHIC OF THE "5 PILLARS" IS PROJECTED UP ON THE CHANCEL SCREEN FOR THE CONGREGATION TO SEE]



7) Dr. Souala, Here, briefly, are the guiding principles and values of our faith, Unitarian Universalism. (Scott presents/recites them) how do you see these beliefs relating/contrasting to your Islamic faith?

[THE FOLLOWING 2 GRAPHICS ARE PROJECTED UP ON THE CHANCEL SCREEN]





8) As I understand it, one key element of Islamic faith is the belief that there is ***"life after Life"*** for faithful Muslims. Can you say more about this? (Rev. Alexander

then explain how Unitarian Universalists view the “destiny” of each human being)

9)

[IF ANY TIME REMAINS FOR FURTHER DIALOGUE, REV. ALEXANDER WILL OPEN UP THE DIALGLUE TO QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR/CONGREGATION…THIS WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERRS OF BOTH CONGREGATIONS TO EXPLORE TODAY’S FOCUS FAITH MORE DEEPLY]