

- A. What has been the most important **insight** you have gained into the religion of **Islam**? Write out your response, limiting it to no more than a **single page**.
- B. You have been invited to an ecumenical conference involving Jews, Christians and Muslims. The goal of the conference is to explore ways in which each tradition can find common ground with each other and work together for world peace and justice. While acknowledging differences, your immediate task is to dialogue with the representatives of the other traditions, and find “**common ground**.”

1. To accomplish your task, you should first attempt to briefly identify the principles upon which your own tradition are based and, to the best of your ability, identify the principles upon which the traditions of others are based, paying attention to those aspects of the religions that have differentiated and separated them. Specifically:

Anchoring yourself from and representing a **Muslim perspective**, be prepared to explore with the representatives of the other traditions the key principles of the spiritual **landscape**, the ultimate spiritual **goals** and the **means** upon which those goals are realized within your **own** tradition, as well as the **other** traditions.

As the recent history of relations between the traditions has been rather volatile and violent, also address the question, “**why do bad things happen to good people** – why do the innocent so often suffer?” Anchor your response from a Muslim perspective, but be prepared to consider Jewish and Christian perspectives as well.

2. After briefly identifying what you believe are the key differences that might separate the religions, suggest what might be shared and held in common, or what might be introduced, as a new way of thinking and acting, that might **mediate and bridge these differences**. Be innovative and think outside the box.

While anchoring yourself from a Muslim perspective, to accomplish the purposes of the conference you will need to comprehend, appreciate and respect the religious traditions of your fellow conference participants. You need to understand what a Jew and Christian would find acceptable as well. Let this appreciation guide you in your deliberations.

Each student should write out your identified distinguishing principles and your meditational approach as an **outline of talking points**, limiting it to no more than **three pages**. It should not be written out as a narrative text. Turn in your individual responses at the “ecumenical conference.”

Once you have formulated your own thoughts on these two questions, meet with your designated group and see if you can come to a consensus approach. Your individual views and approach, along with your group’s views and approach will be shared in dialogue at the “ecumenical conference.”