



SESSION 12: CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this session is to assess new understandings of relations among the Abrahamic faiths.

To achieve this goal, the session will focus on the following objectives:

1. Participants will gain perspectives on what makes these faiths unique and closely related.
2. Participants will discern concrete next steps in their interfaith education.

ACTIVITIES

Discussion

- ❖ Review and discuss NOS chapter, "The Dome."
 - What does Brian Brown say about eyes-wide-open faith vs. blind faith?
 - Review Brian Brown's analogy of the foundation, temple and dome.
 - What shared social action projects on the ground (peace, environment, poverty) might augment future interfaith discussions at the local level, nationally or internationally?
- ❖ Review and discuss the Satanic Verses controversy.
 - Discuss the case for and against the existence of the Satanic verses. Note especially the ambiguities in the Arabic for 53:20 ("high flying one" or "high flying cranes.") In one translation, Muhammad is blaspheming himself; in another, he's making a snide remark about idolaters. (See NOS p.213.) The ambiguity lies in the vowels in a written language that lack vowels. (Note the similarity to Hebrew, another Semitic language.)
 - How did this story get started? Answering the question will point to Ibn Ishaq (NOS p.215) and to the ancient scholarly tradition that is part of Islam's roots (as opposed to the crude fundamentalism the media identifies with Islam.)
 - Briefly review the scholarly tradition that was part of early Christianity (again, as opposed to the crude fundamentalism that the media likes to identify with Christianity) and that has always been part of Judaism.
- ❖ Review the life of Muhammad.
 - What aspects of his life are similar to lives of others God has chosen for special purpose?
 - Note his lack of credentials. He was an illiterate man whom God chose to draft one of the most poetic books of sacred literature.
 - In what way is Muhammad like and unlike Jesus? David? Moses?
 - Review the verse from Deuteronomy from which Waraqa bin Nawfal inferred Hebrew scripture prophesized that an Arab prophet was going to bring God's word to the Arabs.
 - Review the verses from John which Muslims consider prophecies about Muhammad.



Noah's Other Son

Session 12

- Consider the “new” Golden Rule and the importance of being able to respectfully agree to disagree in interfaith dialogue. It’s about dialogue, not conversion.
- Has your faith matured as you have appreciated the views of others in Abraham’s family.

FOR FURTHER READING AND STUDY

NOS Epilogue, pp.225-230