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Research Article

Beyond Tolerance: Islamic Ethics of Living Together and Muslim–Christian Relations in Secular Western Societies

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Abstract

Living together amid religious difference is an increasingly important ethical issue in secular Western Europe, particularly in Muslim–Christian relations. Although tolerance remains necessary for safeguarding religious freedom and protecting difference, it is incomplete when understood primarily as non-interference and does not fully explain the responsibilities that arise through sustained relations across theological difference. This article reconstructs Islamic ethics as a relational framework for shared life amid enduring Muslim–Christian difference. Using a normative-conceptual approach, it brings Abdulaziz Sachedina and Abdullah Sahin into dialogue with theories of toleration and the secular condition. The article's main novelty lies in reconstructing tolerance within a five-part Islamic relational ethics model composed of taʿāruf, karāmah, ʿadl, raḥmah, and taʿāwun. These concepts perform interconnected ethical functions of recognition, dignity, justice, compassionate responsiveness, and cooperative responsibility. The framework shows that enduring religious difference need not be overcome through theological convergence for ethical responsibility to emerge. Rather than rejecting tolerance, the reconstruction situates it as a necessary ethical threshold within a broader Islamic ethics of relational responsibility.

Keywords: Islamic ethics; tolerance; relational responsibility; Muslim–Christian relations; interreligious ethics

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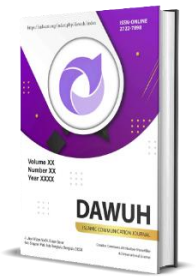

INTRODUCTION

The capacity to live together across religious difference has become an increasingly urgent ethical question in contemporary plural societies. Although tolerance remains indispensable for protecting religious difference from coercion and exclusion, it is insufficient when coexistence is understood primarily in terms of accommodation, restraint, or non-interference. Such an understanding does not fully explain what ethical responsibilities arise when religiously different persons and communities share a common social world while their theological differences persist. Global mobility, migration, and the diversification of European societies have intensified everyday encounters among people whose religious commitments, moral vocabularies, and conceptions of the good do not necessarily converge (Koenig, 2023). In Western Europe, the presence of Muslim communities has become particularly central to public and academic debates concerning integration, social cohesion, and the place of religion in secular societies. Religious diversity, and Islam in particular, continues to be negotiated through symbolic, social, and institutional boundaries that shape recognition, belonging, and participation in European public life (Koenig, 2023). The resulting challenge is therefore not simply how religious difference can be accommodated, but how persons and communities with enduring religious differences ought ethically to inhabit a shared social world. This article responds to this problem by examining how Islamic ethics can be reconstructed as a relational framework that moves beyond tolerance toward recognition, dignity, justice, compassionate responsiveness, and shared responsibility.

Muslim life in Western societies is frequently discussed through the paradigm of integration. Research has examined religious accommodation, the institutional management of religious diversity, and the negotiation of Muslim religiosity within European social and political structures (Koenig, 2023). Yet the language of integration is itself contested. Amir-Moazami (2022) argues that European integration regimes are often structured by a liberal-secular matrix that implicitly distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable forms of religion. From this perspective, Muslim participation in secular public life cannot be understood merely as a linear movement from religious particularity toward social integration. Rather, Muslims negotiate their religious identities within environments in which the legitimacy, visibility, and public expression of religion are themselves continuously contested. The secular condition thus creates a complex field of encounter between religious commitment, non-belief, civic belonging, and competing understandings of public life (Amir-Moazami, 2022).

Within this context, Muslim–Christian relations acquire particular ethical significance. This article focuses specifically on Muslim–Christian relations not to suggest that other forms of interreligious encounter are less important, but because they provide a particularly relevant case for examining religious difference within Western European debates on integration, secularism, belonging, and shared public life. Focusing on this relationship also allows the analysis to examine more precisely how ethical responsibility may be sustained across enduring theological difference without expanding the discussion into interreligious relations in general. Encounters between Muslims and Christians do not occur only through formal theological dialogue or institutional interfaith initiatives (Martínez-Ariño et al., 2023). They increasingly take place in neighbourhoods, educational settings, workplaces, civic institutions, and ordinary networks of friendship and social interaction. Studies of younger Muslim generations in European contexts indicate that interaction with persons of different religious commitments can become part of everyday religious formation and self-understanding (Zimmer & Stein, 2022). Research on Muslim and Christian young adults

likewise suggests that interreligious contact, particularly through neighbourhood and friendship networks, can be positively associated with greater acceptance of diversity (Zimmer & Stein, 2022). More recent scholarship has also drawn attention to the growing civic and governance roles of interreligious initiatives in European public life (Driessen, 2025). These developments indicate that Muslim–Christian relations are increasingly embedded in the practical conditions of sharing social space rather than confined to formal conversations between religious elites.

Interreligious dialogue remains an important response to this reality. Contemporary scholarship emphasises openness, mutual understanding, and active engagement with religious others (Driessen, 2025). Such approaches rightly resist hostility, exclusion, and religious isolation. Similarly, tolerance continues to provide an indispensable political and ethical principle for protecting religious difference from coercion and violence. Recent discussions of tolerance in contexts of "dense coexistence" demonstrate its continuing practical importance where cultural and religious differences are unavoidable features of everyday life (Forst, 2013). The argument advanced here does not treat tolerance as a uniformly minimal or passive concept. Richer accounts of tolerance may incorporate recognition, respect, reciprocal justification, and normative limits, thereby extending beyond mere non-interference. The concern of this article is more specific: tolerance becomes relationally thin when it is reduced to restraint, permission, or the willingness to endure the presence of difference. In this thinner form, tolerance can establish the conditions under which religious others are permitted to coexist without necessarily explaining what further ethical responsibilities arise through the fact of living together (Forst, 2013). The article therefore does not position relational responsibility as a rejection of tolerance, but as an attempt to identify the ethical obligations that become salient when tolerance functions primarily as a threshold of non-coercion rather than as a comprehensive account of interreligious relation.

This relational limitation becomes particularly important when religious difference is approached as an enduring condition rather than a temporary obstacle to social harmony. Under the secular condition, belief is situated within transformed conditions of possibility in which religious faith exists alongside alternative forms of belief and non-belief (Taylor, 2007). The ethical problem cannot therefore be resolved by expecting religious difference eventually to disappear. Nor can Muslim–Christian relations depend upon the achievement of theological agreement. Openness to the religious other does not necessarily require the abandonment of religious commitment (Strahovnik, 2022). The more fundamental question is how ethical relations can be sustained precisely when deep theological differences remain (Taylor, 2007). In this sense, the contemporary problem is no longer merely whether religious difference can be tolerated, but how religiously different persons ought to relate to one another across difference.

Islamic ethical thought contains significant resources for addressing this question. Abdulaziz Sachedina's work on Islamic pluralism foregrounds the moral significance of human dignity and religious plurality (Sachedina, 2009, 2022). His more recent account of Islamic ethics examines the relationship between revelatory guidance and human moral reasoning in the formation of Muslim ethical thought (Sachedina, 2022). Taken together, these contributions provide an important basis for recognising the moral standing of the religious other without requiring religious sameness. More recently, Sahin (2022) has reconstructed Shariʿa as relational ethics and practical wisdom, arguing for a transformative Islamic engagement with secular public space and for critical dialogue between faith-embedded and secular traditions in pursuit of the common good. This relational orientation

significantly expands Islamic ethical reflection beyond legal compliance and opens a conceptual space for thinking about Muslim participation in plural European societies.

Nevertheless, a specific conceptual gap remains. Previous scholarship has established several important insights: tolerance provides a framework for coexistence, interreligious contact can shape attitudes toward religious diversity, Islamic pluralism offers normative grounds for recognising the religious other, and relational Islamic ethics provides resources for practical engagement across difference (Sachedina, 2022; Sahin, 2022). These contributions demonstrate that religious difference can be accommodated, encountered, and ethically recognised. What remains conceptually underdeveloped, however, is the ethical architecture that explains how such recognition develops into sustained moral responsibility. Existing approaches do not yet sufficiently articulate how encounter with the religious other moves from recognition of plurality toward obligations concerning dignity, justice, vulnerability, and shared responsibility. Interreligious dialogue encourages encounter, but it does not always specify the normative movement from encounter to justice and cooperative responsibility (Driessen, 2025; Sahin, 2022). Similarly, relational approaches to Islamic ethics have not been systematically reconstructed in relation to Muslim–Christian living together across enduring theological difference in secular Western Europe. The present article addresses this gap by normatively reconstructing taʿāruf, karāmah, ʿadl, raḥmah, and taʿāwun as interconnected relational functions through which encounter may develop into recognition, dignity, justice, compassionate responsiveness, and shared responsibility. Its distinctive contribution therefore lies not simply in affirming religious plurality, but in specifying the internal ethical movement through which enduring religious difference can generate relational responsibility.

This article addresses this conceptual gap by asking: How can Islamic ethics be reconstructed as a relational framework for living together across enduring Muslim–Christian religious difference in secular Western Europe? This overarching question is developed through three operational sub-questions: (1) In what sense does a thin conception of tolerance remain insufficient for sustaining ethical relations across enduring religious difference? (2) How do secular conditions shape the ethical context in which Muslim–Christian relations are negotiated? and (3) What relational ethical functions do taʿāruf, karāmah, ʿadl, raḥmah, and taʿāwun perform in moving from encounter toward shared responsibility? The article argues that Islamic ethics can move beyond a minimal paradigm of tolerance by organising five ethical concepts taʿāruf (recognition), karāmah (dignity), ʿadl (justice), raḥmah (compassionate responsiveness), and taʿāwun (shared responsibility) into an interconnected relational architecture . These concepts are not presented as a ready-made historical theory of interreligious coexistence. Rather, they are normatively reconstructed through a critical-conceptual dialogue with contemporary debates on secular conditions, Islamic pluralism, and relational ethics.

The article's conceptual contribution lies in explaining ethical relation as a progressive movement from encounter to responsibility. *Taʿāruf* frames religious difference as an occasion for recognition; *karāmah* establishes the moral dignity of the other independently of theological agreement; *ʿadl* transforms dignity into an obligation of justice across difference; *raḥmah* renders ethical relation responsive to concrete vulnerability; and *taʿāwun* extends such responsiveness toward shared responsibility for a common social world. On this account, an Islamic ethics of living together is not simply the passive acceptance of religious difference. It is an active ethical relation through which religiously different persons recognise one another, affirm moral dignity, enact

justice, respond to vulnerability, and assume shared responsibility without dissolving their theological differences.

The discussion proceeds in seven further sections. Following an explanation of the article's critical-conceptual and reconstructive method, the article examines the relational limits of tolerance and the significance of enduring religious difference under secular conditions. It then places Sachedina's Islamic pluralism in dialogue with Sahin's relational ethics before developing the five-part relational architecture of Islamic ethics of living together. The final analytical section considers the implications of this framework for Muslim–Christian relations and the ethics of a shared social world. The article concludes by arguing that living together ethically does not require the dissolution of religious difference, but a richer account of the responsibilities generated through relation across difference.

METHODS

This article uses critical-conceptual analysis and normative-conceptual reconstruction to address how Islamic ethical reasoning can articulate responsibility across enduring Muslim–Christian difference in secular Western Europe. It is a purposive conceptual study, not a systematic review or an empirical study. The working corpus covers four domains: theories of toleration, secularity and Muslim integration in Western Europe, interreligious encounters, and Islamic ethics. Google Scholar was used to locate relevant scholarship through combinations of 'Islamic ethics', 'Islamic pluralism', 'relational ethics', 'Muslim–Christian relations', 'interreligious dialogue', 'religious tolerance', 'secularity', 'Muslim integration', 'Western Europe', 'human dignity', and 'common good'; paired searches included 'Islamic ethics' AND 'Muslim–Christian relations', 'Muslim integration' AND 'Western Europe', and 'relational ethics' AND 'common good'. The searches were supplemented by following references in relevant works. Recent scholarship from 2021–2026 was prioritised to address the contemporary European setting; earlier works by Taylor, Forst, Sachedina, and Honneth were retained for concepts central to the argument. Peer review was preferred for secondary scholarship. Open access facilitated examination and verification of full texts where available, but was neither an exclusion rule nor a proxy for scholarly quality. Sources were retained when they directly informed one of the four domains and supplied a conceptual claim that could be assessed against the central question. Works about religion in general that did not substantively address these domains were not used as evidence for a specific claim. The original search history, dates, deduplication record, and numbers screened were not preserved; consequently, a reproducible search flow or a numerical screening total cannot be reported retrospectively. The corpus is selective, and the argument should not be read as a comprehensive synthesis of the literature.

The first stage read each selected argument in relation to four questions: What kind of difference does it address? What does it say about the standing of the religious other? Which obligations follow from encounter? How does it treat institutional inequality and limits on cooperation? Claims were compared by their object, normative ground, and practical implication. The analysis marked conceptual tensions where non-coercion did not settle positive duties, where formal recognition coexisted with unequal standing, and where support for dialogue left justice or vulnerability under-specified. These tensions identify the problem the reconstruction seeks to address; they are analytical judgements, not findings about the frequency of any practice in Europe (Forst, 2013; Amir-Moazami, 2022; Koenig, 2023; Zimmer & Stein, 2022).

The second stage compares three interlocutors according to their distinct analytical roles. Taylor (2007) explains the transformed conditions in which belief is one option among others; this is a diagnosis of the social setting, not a source of Islamic norms. Sachedina (2009, 2022) supplies an account of moral reasoning, dignity, and the standing of others within Islamic ethical discourse; his contribution grounds the question of why religious others matter ethically. Sahin (2022) treats Shariʿa as relational ethics and practical wisdom in a European minority context; his contribution concerns how moral agency engages shared social concerns. Their positions are compared on the status of difference, the source of normativity, and the route from moral recognition to action. Neither Taylor's diagnosis nor either Islamic author's account contains the five-function sequence proposed here. The sequence begins with this article's own reconstruction of the gap between moral standing and responsibilities in concrete relationships.

The third stage selected Qur'anic concepts through three cumulative tests: a relevant textual anchor, applicability across religious difference without assuming doctrinal agreement, and a distinct task in addressing a tension identified above. Taʿāruf (Qur'an 49:13) names mutual knowing across human plurality; karāmah (17:70) establishes human dignity; ʿadl (4:135; 5:8) subjects relations to justice even against partiality; raḥmah expresses compassionate responsiveness to vulnerability; and taʿāwun (5:2) frames cooperation in good while prohibiting cooperation in wrongdoing. The sequence moves from encounter to standing, fair treatment, responsive care, and bounded joint action. This is a functional ordering proposed by the authors, not an order stated by the Qur'an or inherited as a single classical scheme. Alternative concepts such as ḥikmah (wisdom), iḥsān (excellence in conduct), ṣulḥ (reconciliation), amānah (trust), and ʿahd (covenant) could also organise interreligious ethics. They were not rejected as irrelevant: ḥikmah and iḥsān cut across several functions, while ṣulḥ, amānah, and ʿahd specify particular settings or forms of obligation. A framework centred on covenant or reconciliation might yield a different emphasis. The five chosen here provide a limited analytic vocabulary for the question of responsibility amid ongoing disagreement, rather than an exhaustive list of Islamic virtues.

The Qur'anic passages function as normative anchors rather than as self-interpreting proof texts. The analysis reads each passage in its immediate wording and ethical scope, distinguishes the verse's claim from the contemporary application proposed here, and checks that an application does not erase explicit qualifications, particularly the prohibition in Qur'an 5:2 on cooperation in sin and aggression. Islamic moral reasoning in Sachedina (2022) and Sahin (2022) informs the move from textual values to contemporary relationships. This article does not perform a systematic comparison of classical tafsīr, derive a legal ruling through uṣūl al-fiqh, or claim a consensus interpretation across Islamic schools. Its result is therefore a reasoned ethical proposal, open to correction by more extensive exegetical and jurisprudential work. The model is assessed for textual plausibility, conceptual distinctness, coherence across the five functions, and sensitivity to justice and limits on cooperation; these criteria do not establish empirical effectiveness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Relational Limits of Tolerance

Tolerance remains an essential principle in managing religious difference because it protects individuals and communities from coercion, exclusion, and violence. In secular Western Europe, particularly within Muslim–Christian relations, tolerance provides a necessary foundation for coexistence amid disagreements concerning revelation, religious authority, and moral

commitments. However, the critique developed in this article is not directed at all theories of toleration. Political toleration remains indispensable insofar as it secures legal and institutional protection for religious difference, while richer liberal accounts may also include reciprocal justification, respect, and normative limits. The concern here is primarily with thin forms of political and social toleration when they are reduced to non-interference, restraint, or the peaceful endurance of difference. Such forms can protect the existence of religious difference without necessarily specifying the positive ethical responsibilities that emerge through sustained relations among religiously different persons. Accordingly, this article does not reject toleration as such; rather, it asks what further ethical obligations arise once non-coercion and peaceful coexistence have been secured.

Contemporary scholarship highlights the importance of tolerance under conditions of plural social life. Heuser and Wolf (2024) describe tolerance as significant within "dense coexistence," where individuals encounter cultural and religious differences through everyday proximity. In such contexts, tolerance enables disagreement without hostility and allows communities to maintain distinct convictions. Nevertheless, tolerance generally operates through restraint and non-interference. As Forst (2013) notes, toleration often involves accepting beliefs or practices that remain contested or considered objectionable. Although this represents an ethical achievement compared with coercion, it may remain relationally limited when it becomes the primary vocabulary for engaging difference.

This article refers to this limitation as the relational thinness of tolerance. Tolerance can establish the conditions under which religious difference is permitted, but it does not necessarily articulate the positive responsibilities generated through sustained relationships with religious others. Therefore, the ethical question extends beyond whether religious difference should be accepted toward how persons with enduring differences should relate to one another.

This limitation becomes visible when tolerance is contrasted with encounter. Contemporary interreligious scholarship increasingly emphasises openness and active engagement rather than mere non-interference. Cibotaru (2023) highlights openness as central to interreligious dialogue, while van den Toren (2023) argues that religious commitment does not prevent genuine openness toward others. Encounter transforms the religious other from someone whose difference is merely tolerated into a moral subject whose experiences, suffering, and aspirations require ethical attention.

Studies of everyday interreligious relations further demonstrate this relational dimension. Zimmer and Stein (2022) show that Muslim–Christian contact among young adults influences attitudes toward religious diversity, while Donlic (2023) illustrates how everyday interactions shape Muslim religious experiences in Europe. These studies indicate that religious difference is not encountered only through abstract theological disagreement but through shared institutions, neighbourhoods, and social practices.

The challenge becomes more complex within secular Western societies, where Muslim–Christian relations develop within unequal symbolic and institutional conditions. Koenig (2023) demonstrates that Muslim integration in Europe is shaped by social and institutional boundaries, while Amir-Moazami (2022) highlights how secular-liberal frameworks may distinguish between acceptable and problematic forms of religion. Consequently, formal tolerance may coexist with unequal recognition. A religious minority may be permitted to exist while still experiencing marginalisation or suspicion.

Moving beyond tolerance, therefore, does not mean abandoning it but extending its ethical horizon. Without tolerance, deeper relations risk becoming coercive or assimilationist. However, tolerance alone cannot address questions of dignity, justice, and shared responsibility. A relational ethics must explain how difference can remain while generating obligations toward recognition and cooperation.

Recent interreligious initiatives demonstrate this movement from coexistence toward co-responsibility. Religious communities increasingly participate in civic engagement and shared institutional responsibilities beyond doctrinal dialogue (Ozzano, 2026; Gmoser et al., 2024). Such practices suggest that religious others are not merely individuals whose differences must be endured but partners capable of contributing to a common social world.

Thus, tolerance should be understood as a moral minimum rather than the final ethical goal. The conceptual challenge is to develop a framework that preserves religious difference while enabling a progression from tolerance to recognition, dignity, justice, compassionate responsiveness, and shared responsibility. Islamic ethics provides resources for such reconstruction, not by eliminating disagreement, but by explaining how enduring religious difference can become the basis for ethical responsibility.

Secular Conditions and Enduring Religious Difference

The relational limits of tolerance become clearer when religious difference is examined within contemporary secular societies. In this article, however, the discussion refers primarily to Western Europe rather than to "Western societies" as a homogeneous category. Western European societies share certain features of religious pluralisation and secular transformation, but their secular arrangements are neither uniform nor institutionally identical. They differ in the historical relationship between religion and the state, the legal and institutional accommodation of religious communities, and the forms through which religion is recognised or regulated in public life. The term "secular conditions" is therefore used here as an analytical description of transformed conditions of belief and public religious presence, rather than as a claim that all Western European societies operate according to a single secular model.

Secular conditions are often understood through institutional separation between religion and state, declining religious authority, or reduced participation in organised religion. However, these descriptions do not fully capture the ethical environment in which Muslims and Christians encounter one another. Charles Taylor's account of secularity is significant because it shifts attention from the disappearance of religion toward the transformation of the conditions under which belief exists and is experienced (Taylor, 2007). Secularity does not represent the absence of faith but a social condition in which religious belief exists alongside multiple alternatives of belief and non-belief.

Taylor's contribution challenges the assumption that modernisation inevitably leads to religious decline. In a secular age, religious commitment remains possible, but it is no longer the uncontested framework of social meaning. Believers encounter alternative religious, moral, and existential perspectives that shape how their own convictions are understood. Christians and Muslims increasingly practise their traditions within plural environments where their theological commitments cannot be assumed to define the wider social order. For the purposes of this article, Taylor's account functions as a broad diagnostic framework rather than as a description of a uniform Western European institutional order. His analysis is therefore important not as a theory of

interreligious ethics itself, but as a diagnosis of the transformed conditions in which ethical relations across religious difference must be negotiated.

This transformed condition has significant implications for Muslim–Christian relations in Western Europe. Religious difference is no longer an exceptional encounter between separate communities but part of everyday social life. Muslims and Christians share schools, workplaces, neighbourhoods, and civic institutions while maintaining different understandings of revelation, authority, and moral obligation. The ethical challenge lies precisely in sustaining relations where disagreement remains present within ordinary social proximity.

However, Western European secular contexts should not be understood as neutral or interchangeable spaces in which all religious and non-religious positions coexist under identical conditions. While Taylor explains the transformation of belief conditions, the organisation of religious difference is also shaped by historically specific institutional and power relations. Koenig (2023) demonstrates that Muslim integration in Europe is influenced by symbolic, social, and institutional boundaries that shape perceptions of Muslim belonging. Amir-Moazami (2022) further argues that liberal-secular frameworks may evaluate religious expressions according to assumptions about acceptable forms of public religion. These observations indicate that the institutional management and public recognition of religion vary across contexts, even where societies may broadly be described as secular. Therefore, the issue extends beyond legal tolerance of Islam toward the conditions under which Muslim religiosity becomes recognised, accepted, or problematised.

This article argues that adaptation in Western European secular contexts should not be understood as a one-directional demand placed solely upon religious minorities. Muslims engage with secular institutions and plural moral cultures, but shared life is not merely a process of conformity to an already established secular order. Instead, common life is continually shaped through interaction among religious and non-religious citizens. Living together is therefore a relational process involving negotiation, critique, and mutual transformation.

The persistence of religious difference also challenges approaches that view dialogue as a path toward theological convergence. Dialogue can produce understanding and trust without eliminating disagreement. Van den Toren (2023) argues that openness toward religious others does not require abandoning commitment to one's own tradition. Thus, ethical relations must be capable of existing across theological disagreement rather than depending upon its disappearance.

The concept of enduring religious difference describes this condition of sustained social proximity alongside continuing theological disagreement. Difference does not necessarily produce hostility; it can also become the context in which ethical responsibilities are recognised. The central question therefore shifts from how disagreement can be eliminated toward how meaningful relations can be sustained despite disagreement. This includes recognising dignity across theological boundaries, pursuing justice for religious others, responding compassionately to vulnerability, and developing shared responsibility within a common social world.

Taylor, Koenig, and Amir-Moazami provide important diagnoses of secular conditions and their social dynamics, but they do not construct an Islamic ethical framework for living together. Nor are their analyses treated here as evidence of a single Western European model of secularity. Rather, they identify different dimensions of a broader environment in which belief, institutional regulation, recognition, and religious difference are negotiated. The normative task of this article is therefore to explore how Islamic moral reasoning interprets relations of proximity, interdependence, and shared vulnerability across religious boundaries. The following discussion turns to Sachedina's

account of Islamic pluralism and Sahin's reconstruction of Islamic ethics as relational practical wisdom to examine how recognition of difference may develop into a richer architecture of ethical responsibility.

Sachedina and Sahin: From Pluralism to Relational Ethics

The diagnosis developed in the preceding sections establishes two interconnected problems. First, tolerance may remain relationally thin when it regulates the permission of difference without specifying the positive ethical responsibilities generated through sustained relations. Second, under secular conditions, Muslim–Christian theological difference must increasingly be understood as enduring within contexts of social proximity. The task for Islamic ethics is therefore not simply to defend the legitimacy of religious plurality. It is to explain how recognition of religious others can develop into a richer account of ethical responsibility across difference. The works of Abdulaziz Sachedina and Abdullah Sahin provide important resources for this task, although neither offers the five-part relational architecture developed in this article.

Sachedina: Plurality, Moral Standing, and Islamic Ethical Reasoning

Sachedina's contribution is significant because he relocates religious plurality from a matter of political necessity to a question of Islamic moral reasoning. He is selected as one of the principal Islamic ethical interlocutors in this article because his work directly addresses three issues central to the present inquiry: the normative significance of religious plurality, the dignity and moral standing of religious others, and the relationship between revelation and human moral reasoning. These concerns provide an appropriate foundation for asking why persons who remain theologically different should nevertheless be included within the sphere of Islamic ethical responsibility. Sachedina's contribution is complemented by Sahin's relational approach, which shifts the analytical emphasis from the recognition of the religious other toward practical ethical engagement, relational responsibility, and participation in a shared social world. The two thinkers are therefore brought into dialogue not because they represent the entirety of Islamic ethical thought, but because they address analytically distinct yet complementary dimensions of the problem examined in this article.

In his works on democratic pluralism and interreligious relations, religious diversity is not understood merely as a social reality that Muslims must pragmatically tolerate, but as a condition requiring engagement within Islamic normative discourse itself (Sachedina, 2009, 2022). This approach prevents Islamic ethics from becoming merely reactive to modern secular demands and instead opens the possibility of understanding relations with religious others through internal Islamic moral categories.

Central to Sachedina's perspective is the defence of human dignity and the recognition that religious plurality possesses moral significance within Islamic ethical reflection (Sachedina, 2009, 2022). In this article, this significance is conceptualised as moral standing, an analytical term referring to the recognition that religious others remain ethical subjects whose dignity and welfare cannot be disregarded because of theological disagreement. This concept extends beyond thin forms of tolerance: while tolerance may restrain coercion toward difference, recognition of moral standing affirms that the other belongs within the sphere of ethical consideration. Therefore, questions of dignity, justice, and human welfare remain relevant even when fundamental religious disagreements persist.

Sachedina's later account of Islamic ethics further develops this perspective by emphasising the relationship between revelation, reason, and interpretive moral judgement in shaping ethical

reasoning (Sachedina, 2022). Islamic ethics, in this view, is not simply the application of predetermined rules derived from scripture, but involves an ongoing engagement between revelatory guidance, rational reflection, and traditions of moral interpretation. This framework is particularly relevant for contemporary interreligious relations, where questions of Muslim–Christian coexistence in secular societies cannot always be answered through direct textual prescriptions.

The importance of reason does not replace revelation with secular ethics. Rather, it enables Islamic moral reasoning to interpret revelatory values in relation to changing human circumstances. Accordingly, this article does not claim to uncover a complete historical theory of Muslim–Christian coexistence from Islamic sources, but reconstructs how Islamic ethical concepts may respond to contemporary challenges. While Sachedina establishes why the religious other possesses ethical significance, further questions remain concerning how recognition develops into responsibility, particularly in responding to exclusion, vulnerability, and shared social challenges.

At the same time, the use of Sachedina and Sahin requires analytical qualification. Their perspectives should not be treated as exhaustive or uncontested representations of Islamic ethics. Other Islamic ethical approaches may place greater emphasis on jurisprudential boundaries, communal obligations, doctrinal distinctions, or different configurations of moral responsibility. Sachedina's emphasis on plurality and moral standing does not by itself provide a sufficiently developed account of how recognition becomes sustained relational responsibility, while Sahin's relational orientation requires further conceptual specification regarding the ethical functions through which such responsibility develops. The present article therefore does not simply adopt either perspective. Instead, it treats them as selected interlocutors whose complementary strengths and limitations provide the basis for a further normative-conceptual reconstruction.

Sahin: Relational Ethics, Practical Wisdom, and the Common Good

Sahin's reconstruction of Shariʿa as relational ethics and practical wisdom advances the discussion toward the relational dimensions of Islamic moral life. Writing within the context of European Muslim minority experiences, Sahin (2022) challenges reductive understandings of Shariʿa as merely a fixed legal system and emphasises its ethical, pedagogical, and relational character. This perspective is particularly relevant in secular European societies, where Muslim ethical life develops within complex social environments that cannot be reduced to a simple opposition between Islamic normativity and secular modernity.

The concept of relational ethics shifts attention from isolated moral decisions toward the quality and direction of human relationships. Ethical life involves not only determining whether actions are permissible but also understanding how individuals relate to others and exercise moral judgement within concrete circumstances. Sahin's emphasis on practical wisdom highlights that Islamic ethical reasoning requires interpretive engagement with changing social realities while remaining grounded in an Islamic moral framework (Sahin, 2022).

This relational orientation also provides an alternative understanding of Muslim participation in secular public life. Rather than viewing Muslim existence solely through adaptation, resistance, or identity preservation, Sahin presents Muslim ethical agency as capable of transformative engagement with wider society. Islamic moral reasoning can contribute to shared social concerns without requiring Muslims to abandon their religious commitments (Sahin, 2022).

For Muslim–Christian relations, this approach has significant implications. If Islamic ethics is fundamentally relational, the religious other cannot be understood merely as an object of legal classification. Christians encountered within neighbourhoods, institutions, and civic spaces become participants in relationships where Muslim ethical responsibility is exercised. The central question therefore shifts from simply identifying the status of the other toward determining appropriate forms of conduct, cooperation, and responsiveness within shared social conditions.

Sahin's emphasis on the common good further expands this ethical framework. Although Muslims and Christians may maintain theological disagreements, they remain connected through shared challenges such as inequality, exclusion, and social vulnerability. A relational Islamic ethics must therefore explain how moral responsibility extends toward others whose wellbeing is interconnected within a common society.

For the purpose of this article, Sahin's contribution provides the basis for understanding ethical relations as a progressive movement involving recognition, dignity, justice, responsiveness, and shared responsibility. The task is not to claim that Sahin's relational ethics lacks normative depth, but to further reconstruct how these ethical dimensions may be interconnected within an Islamic vocabulary for enduring religious difference.

From Pluralism to a Relational Architecture of Responsibility

The conceptual dialogue between Sachedina and Sahin provides important resources for addressing the ethical challenge of living together across enduring religious difference. Sachedina establishes the moral significance of religious plurality, human dignity, and the recognition of religious others within Islamic ethical reasoning. Sahin, meanwhile, develops an understanding of Islamic ethics as relational practical wisdom oriented toward engagement, responsibility, and the common good. Together, their approaches enable a movement beyond an ethical framework concerned only with the tolerance of religious difference.

Their contributions, however, serve different analytical functions. Sachedina addresses the foundational question of why the religious other possesses moral significance within Islamic ethics, while Sahin addresses how Muslim moral agency operates within complex social relationships and shared conditions. The remaining conceptual task concerns how the movement from recognition of the other toward ethical responsibility can be normatively articulated.

This article's contribution lies at this third level. It does not seek to replace Sachedina's pluralism with Sahin's relational ethics, nor does it claim that their works contain an explicit five-stage model. Instead, it offers an authorial normative-conceptual reconstruction that develops taʿāruf, karāmah, ʿadl, raḥmah, and taʿāwun as interconnected ethical movements from interreligious encounter toward shared responsibility.

Within this framework, *taʿāruf* represents encounter and recognition of difference as an opportunity for engagement rather than separation. *Karāmah* establishes the dignity of the other as a moral subject. *ʿAdl* transforms recognition into demands for justice. *Raḥmah* introduces responsiveness toward vulnerability and human suffering. Finally, *taʿāwun* extends ethical relations toward cooperation and shared responsibility within a common social world. These concepts are not presented as a historically fixed sequence within Islamic tradition but as an analytical reconstruction responding to contemporary ethical challenges.

Thus, moving beyond tolerance does not mean abandoning the protection of difference or seeking theological agreement. Rather, it asks what ethical responsibilities emerge after the other

has been recognised as different yet remains part of a shared social reality. The proposed framework argues that enduring religious difference can become the basis for a progressive movement from recognition to dignity, justice, compassionate responsiveness, and shared responsibility.

A Relational Islamic Ethics of Living Together

This reconstruction develops an Islamic ethical framework that explains how encounter across enduring religious difference may become responsibility. It organises five concepts *taʿāruf, karāmah, ʿadl, raḥmah,* and *taʿāwun* as interconnected ethical movements rather than a historically fixed hierarchy or complete representation of Islamic ethics. Taʿāruf establishes encounter, karāmah affirms dignity, ʿadl addresses justice, raḥmah responds to vulnerability, and taʿāwun extends responsibility into cooperation. The Qurʾanic concepts function as normative anchors, while their interconnection represents an authorial reconstruction developed for Muslim–Christian relations under secular conditions. Table 1 summarises the five-part relational architecture developed in this article by mapping each Islamic ethical concept onto its Qurʾanic grounding, ethical function, relational movement, and practical implication for Muslim–Christian relations. The table should be read as an analytical representation of the present normative-conceptual reconstruction rather than as a historically fixed sequence within Islamic ethical tradition.

Table 1. Qurʾanic Foundations, Ethical Functions, and Relational Implications of the Five-Part Islamic Ethical Architecture

Islamic ethical concept	Qurʾanic basis	Ethical function	Relational movement	Practical implication for Muslim–Christian relations
Taʿāruf	Qurʾan 49:13	Epistemic openness and recognition of religious difference	Encounter → Recognition	Encourages Muslims and Christians to move beyond abstract assumptions by engaging one another as concrete persons and learning across religious difference without requiring theological agreement.
Karāmah	Qurʾan 17:70	Recognition of inherent human dignity and moral standing	Recognition → Dignity	Requires the religious other to be treated as a bearer of moral worth whose dignity does not depend on doctrinal agreement or communal membership.
ʿAdl	Qurʾan 5:8; 4:135	Justice-sensitive evaluation of social and institutional relations	Dignity → Justice	Directs attention to unequal power relations, exclusion, and injustice affecting religious others, including those

				outside one's own religious community.
Raḥmah	Qurʾanic moral vocabulary of compassion; specific verse should be stated explicitly in the manuscript	Compassionate responsiveness to vulnerability and suffering	Justice → Responsive Compassion	Requires attention to the lived vulnerability and suffering of religious others, complementing structural justice with concrete human responsiveness.
Taʿāwun	Qurʾan 5:2	Morally bounded cooperation and shared responsibility	Responsiveness → Shared Responsibility	Extends interreligious relations beyond dialogue toward cooperative action on common concerns such as exclusion, inequality, and social vulnerability while preserving theological difference.

Taʿāruf: From Encounter to Recognition

Taʿāruf represents the starting point of relational responsibility because ethical relations require encountering difference rather than merely classifying it. Qurʾan 49:13 presents human plurality as an opportunity for mutual knowing (*li-taʿārafū*), where difference is neither erased nor reduced to separation. Drawing on Sahin's relational interpretation (Sahin, 2022), taʿāruf signifies openness to learning from the other and moving beyond abstract religious categories toward concrete human encounter. In Muslim–Christian relations, it interrupts inherited assumptions and enables recognition without requiring theological agreement. However, encounter alone does not create responsibility; therefore, the ethical movement must deepen from recognition toward karāmah.

Karāmah: From Recognition to Dignity

Karāmah establishes the moral significance of the person encountered through taʿāruf. Qurʾan 17:70 frames human dignity as a quality inherent to the children of Adam, not a status granted only after religious agreement. Drawing on Sachedina's emphasis on dignity and the ethical significance of religious others (Sachedina, 2009, 2022), karāmah provides the normative basis for recognising the other as a bearer of moral worth. It challenges conditional acceptance and prevents religious others from being reduced to objects of strategy or social utility. However, dignity alone does not address unequal conditions; therefore, the ethical movement proceeds toward ʿadl as justice in social relations.

ʿAdl: From Dignity to Justice

ʿAdl transforms the recognition of dignity into an ethical demand by addressing the social and institutional conditions that shape relations across difference. Qurʾanic teachings on justice (Qurʾan 5:8; 4:135) emphasise that justice must not depend on affinity or communal loyalty. Within Muslim–Christian relations, ʿadl requires attention to unequal power relations and injustices experienced by religious others, including when they do not belong to one's own community. Thus,

theological difference cannot exclude others from moral concern. Yet justice alone does not fully address human suffering, requiring the ethical movement to continue toward *raḥmah*.

Raḥmah: From Justice to Responsive Compassion

Raḥmah introduces the responsive dimension of relational responsibility by framing compassion as an ethical orientation toward vulnerability rather than merely an emotion. Within this architecture, raḥmah prevents moral reasoning from becoming detached from the concrete suffering of others. Unlike pity, it does not reinforce distance or hierarchy but allows the vulnerability of the other to become a moral claim across religious boundaries. Connected with ʿadl, raḥmah balances justice with human attentiveness: justice addresses structural conditions, while compassion responds to lived experiences. Since vulnerability transcends theological difference, raḥmah enables ethical responsiveness without requiring religious agreement. Sustained responsibility, however, requires movement toward taʿāwun.

Taʿāwun: From Responsiveness to Shared Responsibility

Taʿāwun represents the final movement from ethical recognition toward cooperative responsibility. Qurʾan 5:2 frames cooperation as participation in righteousness while limiting cooperation in wrongdoing, showing that Islamic cooperation remains morally bounded. Within Muslim–Christian relations, taʿāwun extends beyond dialogue toward shared action addressing common concerns such as exclusion, inequality, and social vulnerability. Such cooperation is ethically appropriate when it contributes to just and beneficial purposes, respects the dignity and agency of all participants, and does not require either community to abandon its religious commitments. Cooperation, however, is not an unconditional ethical obligation. Refusal, critique, or resistance may become necessary when proposed forms of cooperation contribute to wrongdoing, legitimise exclusion, reproduce domination, or require participation in practices that violate justice or human dignity. In unequal social contexts, ʿadl therefore functions as a critical limit on taʿāwun: cooperation must be assessed not only by its stated goals but also by the distribution of power, voice, responsibility, and benefit among those involved. Relational responsibility thus requires attention to whether cooperation genuinely addresses injustice or merely conceals existing asymmetries behind the language of partnership. It does not require identical beliefs or motivations; Muslims and Christians may act from distinct religious commitments while contributing to shared goods. Consistent with Sahin's emphasis on transformative participation and the common good (Sahin, 2022), taʿāwun demonstrates that enduring religious difference can become a basis for responsible cooperation rather than an obstacle to ethical action.

From Encounter to Shared Ethical Responsibility

The five concepts form an interconnected normative movement: *taʿāruf* opens difference toward recognition; *karāmah* establishes dignity; *ʿadl* evaluates what dignity requires under unequal conditions; *raḥmah* responds to vulnerability; and *taʿāwun* transforms responsibility into cooperative action. As summarised in Table 1, each concept performs a distinct but non-redundant ethical function within the architecture. Their relationship is progressive in analytical function but recursive in practice: recognition without dignity may remain superficial, dignity without justice may overlook unequal conditions, justice without *raḥmah* may become detached from lived vulnerability, and compassionate responsiveness without *taʿāwun* may fail to develop into sustained

cooperative responsibility. Together, they provide an Islamic ethical grammar that moves beyond thin tolerance without rejecting toleration itself. Tolerance protects the existence of difference, while this architecture asks how enduring difference can generate recognition, dignity, justice, compassionate responsiveness, and shared responsibility within a common social world.

Beyond Tolerance toward Relational Responsibility

The relational architecture developed in the preceding section allows the argument of this article to return to its central question: how can Islamic ethics move beyond a minimal tolerance paradigm toward an account of living together capable of sustaining responsibility across enduring Muslim–Christian difference? The answer proposed here is not that tolerance should be abandoned. Rather, the ethical protection of difference needs to be situated within a wider account of relation. The significance of this claim becomes clearer when the reconstructed model is considered in relation to three fields of discussion: theories of toleration, contemporary Islamic ethics, and Muslim–Christian relations under secular conditions.

Rethinking the Ethical Threshold of Tolerance

The first contribution concerns the ethical threshold established by tolerance. As Forst (2013) demonstrates, toleration is not merely indifference but involves objection, acceptance, and limits whose normative quality depends on their justification and institutional organisation. Therefore, this article does not reject tolerance as passive permission. Rather, it argues that the limitation emerges when tolerance becomes the complete ethical vocabulary for relations across religious difference. Tolerance explains why religious convictions should not be coercively suppressed, but it does not necessarily explain why the dignity, vulnerability, or experiences of injustice of religious others should become positive ethical concerns. This limitation is described as the relational thinness of tolerance: non-interference protects difference but does not fully articulate the responsibilities generated through sustained human relations. The proposed Islamic ethical grammar therefore relocates tolerance within a wider framework of relational responsibility. Tolerance establishes the necessary protection that allows others to remain different, while relational responsibility asks what ethical claims emerge when religiously different persons share a common social world. “Beyond tolerance” does not mean abandoning toleration or replacing it historically, since protections against coercion remain essential. Instead, it refers to expanding the ethical horizon beyond permission toward recognition, dignity, justice, responsiveness, and shared responsibility. Tolerance protects enduring difference; relational responsibility explains how such difference becomes ethically meaningful.

Islamic Ethics as a Grammar of Relational Responsibility

The second contribution concerns the contemporary interpretation of Islamic ethics. This article presents Islamic ethical reasoning as neither limited to isolated legal rulings nor detached from revelatory moral traditions. Drawing on Sachedina’s account of revelation, reason, and interpretive moral judgement, and Sahin’s reconstruction of Shariʿa as relational ethics and practical wisdom, the framework understands Islamic concepts as resources for addressing changing conditions of human relations (Sachedina, 2022; Sahin, 2022). The concept of “ethical grammar” refers not to fixed answers for every moral problem but to a normative structure through which ethical relations can be interpreted. The proposed architecture identifies how Muslims may understand encounter, dignity, injustice, vulnerability, and cooperation

without reducing interreligious ethics to predetermined rules. This approach does not require theological convergence; rather, it allows the dignity, suffering, and moral claims of religious others to become significant within Islamic ethical reflection (Sachedina, 2009, 2022). Relational responsibility therefore challenges purely intra-communal moral concern. While religious boundaries remain meaningful, they do not determine the limits of ethical consideration. The religious other may remain theologically different while becoming ethically proximate, meaning that their dignity, vulnerability, and experiences of injustice enter one's moral awareness. Extending Sahin's emphasis on relationality and the common good (Sahin, 2022), this reconstruction offers an ethical architecture showing how sustained encounters can develop into deeper forms of responsibility across religious difference.

Muslim–Christian Relations under Secular Conditions

The third contribution concerns Muslim–Christian relations in secular Western Europe. While dialogue, mutual understanding, and prejudice reduction remain essential, this article argues that interreligious engagement should be evaluated not only by improved understanding but also by its capacity to sustain ethical responsibility. Under the secular conditions described by Taylor (2007), Muslims and Christians encounter one another within a plural social world where theological agreement cannot be assumed. Therefore, the success of interreligious relations should not be measured by convergence but by the ability to sustain dignity, justice, responsiveness, and cooperation amid continuing disagreement. The proposed framework can be illustrated in ordinary social settings. In a neighbourhood experiencing social exclusion or unequal access to local resources, taʿāruf may begin with sustained encounter across religious boundaries, while karāmah requires that residents be treated as equal moral subjects rather than as representatives of competing communities. ʿAdl would direct attention to whether particular groups are disadvantaged in access to services or participation, raḥmah would require responsiveness to concrete experiences of vulnerability, and taʿāwun could take the form of cooperative action to address shared local concerns. In schools, relational responsibility may involve protecting students from religious marginalisation while creating opportunities for respectful engagement across difference. In workplaces, it may require fair treatment of religious practices, attention to unequal power relations, and cooperation without demanding the suppression of religious identity. Similarly, civic or interfaith initiatives may move beyond symbolic dialogue when Muslim and Christian participants jointly respond to issues such as poverty, exclusion, or social vulnerability while retaining distinct theological commitments. These illustrations do not constitute empirical evidence for the model but demonstrate how its ethical functions may operate within the everyday settings in which interreligious encounters already occur.

This framework also challenges integration narratives that place Muslim adaptation as the primary ethical demand. As Koenig (2023) and Amir-Moazami (2022) demonstrate, Muslim belonging in Europe is shaped by social, symbolic, and institutional boundaries that influence how religious expressions are recognised. A relational ethics of living together views shared life as multidirectional, requiring attention not only to interpersonal understanding but also to recognition, power, and vulnerability. The model does not claim moral superiority for Muslims or function merely as minority self-protection. Its principles of dignity and justice apply universally across contexts. Rather than offering a fixed programme of interfaith activity, relational responsibility provides criteria for evaluating whether encounters move beyond mutual recognition toward ethically meaningful participation in one another's social world.

The Scope and Limits of Relational Responsibility

The model developed in this article has several important limitations. It is a normative-conceptual reconstruction rather than an empirical theory of Muslim–Christian behaviour. The architecture does not demonstrate that Muslim and Christian communities in Western Europe actually move through the relational functions identified here, nor does it predict the conditions under which interreligious cooperation will succeed. Such questions require empirical research examining how these ethical concepts are interpreted, negotiated, resisted, or embodied within particular social contexts. Future studies could employ semi-structured interviews or focus-group discussions with Muslim and Christian participants to examine how recognition, dignity, justice, compassion, and cooperation are understood in everyday interreligious relations. In-depth case studies of interfaith organisations, neighbourhood initiatives, schools, or civic programmes could explore whether and how the five relational functions emerge in concrete practices, including situations of disagreement, unequal power, or failed cooperation. Comparative research across different Western European contexts could further investigate how variations in secular arrangements, institutional recognition of religion, minority-majority relations, and local histories shape the enactment of relational responsibility. Longitudinal or multi-site qualitative designs may also help assess whether relationships develop, regress, or shift across the proposed relational functions over time. The model also does not attempt to resolve theological disagreements between Islam and Christianity. Its purpose is to explore how ethical relations may be sustained precisely when substantive religious differences remain. Relational responsibility does not eliminate conflict, and justice may require critique, refusal, or resistance when cooperation becomes ethically problematic. Therefore, living together should not be understood as the achievement of permanent harmony. These limitations define the scope of the argument. Relational ethics does not require agreement, emotional closeness, or unrestricted cooperation. Rather, it argues that enduring religious difference does not terminate ethical responsibility. Under conditions of social proximity and interdependence, Islamic moral reasoning provides resources for recognising the religious other as ethically significant without requiring the disappearance of difference. Thus, moving beyond tolerance refers not to rejecting toleration, but to expanding its ethical horizon. Tolerance protects the possibility of difference; relational responsibility examines what obligations emerge when different religious communities inhabit a shared social world.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined how Islamic ethics may move beyond a minimal tolerance paradigm toward a framework of living together capable of sustaining responsibility across enduring Muslim–Christian difference in secular Western societies. Rather than viewing religious plurality as a temporary condition to be overcome through theological convergence or secularisation, the article approaches difference as a lasting context of ethical relation. Three main conclusions emerge. First, tolerance remains normatively necessary but relationally insufficient when treated as the completion of ethical responsibility. Its protection against coercion provides the foundation for plural social life, yet allowing others to remain different does not fully explain why their dignity, vulnerability, or experiences of injustice should become moral concerns. This limitation is described as the relational thinness of tolerance. The argument does not reject toleration but highlights the ethical questions that arise beyond non-coercion. Second, secular conditions do

not eliminate the significance of religion or make Muslim–Christian difference socially irrelevant. Religious identities continue to develop within plural moral environments shaped by institutional structures, competing values, and unequal conditions of recognition. Therefore, Muslim adaptation to secular Western societies cannot be understood solely as conformity to an already established order. The conditions of coexistence are relationally produced through interactions among religious communities and wider social institutions. Third, Islamic ethical reasoning contains resources for recognising religious others without requiring theological agreement. The religious other may remain theologically different while becoming ethically significant. Ethical proximity does not imply doctrinal convergence or unrestricted solidarity; rather, it refers to the possibility that another person's dignity, vulnerability, injustice, and moral agency become part of one's ethical consideration.

The central contribution of this article lies in its normative-conceptual reconstruction of taʿāruf, karāmah, ʿadl, raḥmah, and taʿāwun as interconnected relational functions. Rather than forming a historically fixed hierarchy, these concepts are reconstructed as an Islamic ethical grammar that moves from encounter and recognition toward dignity, justice, compassionate responsiveness, and cooperative responsibility. Their recursive relationship shows how enduring religious difference can generate ethical responsibility without requiring theological convergence. This reconstruction does not replace tolerance but situates it within a broader Islamic ethics of relational responsibility. Tolerance remains necessary for protecting religious difference, yet it is incomplete when treated as the final ethical horizon of coexistence. Relational responsibility extends beyond non-coercion by asking how religiously different persons recognise one another's dignity, respond to injustice and vulnerability, and cooperate within a shared social world. For Muslim–Christian relations, this means that interreligious engagement should be evaluated not only by improved understanding, but also by its capacity to sustain justice, responsiveness, and ethically bounded cooperation. Because the framework is normative-conceptual, future empirical research is needed to examine how these responsibilities are interpreted, enacted, negotiated, or resisted in particular social contexts.

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