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Islamic Pluralism and Küng's Global Ethical Discourse: Toward a "Global-Maqāṣid" Centered Paradigm

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Abstract

This study proposes an integrated framework of religious pluralism, termed as "Global-Maqāṣid Ethic," that aims to bridge Islamic theological principles in line with Hans Küng's vision of a Global Ethical discourse. Grounded in comprehensive literature and empirical trends, this study first reviews classical Islamic views on pluralism (e.g. the Medina Charter and jurisprudence on *ahl al-kitāb*) alongside contemporary Muslim scholars, namely Muhammad Abduh, Fazlur Rahman, and Tariq Ramadan's vision of pluralism that is reinterpreted in light of modern norms. Additionally, the study builds on faith and its interconnectedness with perspective and interpretations, to which Kung considers a 'reformation formula'. In parallel, the study develops the concept of interfaith ethical frameworks within Western thought, focusing on John Hick's pluralistic theology and Küng's "Declaration toward a Global Ethical discourse." The study also adopts a comparative textual hermeneutics—examining Qurʾānic verses, Prophetic practices, and Küng's writings by field analyses of pluralism models across diverse regions. The current findings revealed substantial convergence between Islamic *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* (higher objectives of law) and Küng's universal moral commitments, particularly regarding non-violence, justice, truthfulness, and human dignity. The proposed '*Global-Maqāṣid'* presents a comprehensive, contextually attuned paradigm for pluralism that is both authentically rooted in Islamic ethics and globally resonant, maintaining an ethical discourse. By harmonising spiritual principles with empirical realities, this framework aims to inform policy, educational initiatives, and interfaith dialogue in pursuit of sustainable coexistence built on shared ethical ground.

Keywords: global ethical discourse, global *maqasid*, Islamic pluralism, Islamic theology, reformation formula

Introduction

In the era of rapid globalization and intensified religious diversity, religion is frequently associated with conflicts, wars, and chaos. Such events have given rise to Islamophobia, anti-Christian, and anti-Jewish slogans and campaigns, which have compromised peace and humanity by creating intolerance and acts of violence among people. Prior research has reflected upon these incidents of communal strife from localized sectarian tensions to large-scale conflicts, underscoring the human costs of exclusivism. Yet alongside these challenges, transnational networks of dialogue and cooperation reveal the potential for mutual enrichment when religious communities engage one another in a spirit of respect. The goal is to maintain peace and order that can be assured by global ethics. The ideology of global ethics works as a reunion for all religions, transcending that

all religions are equal and nor is dominant over the other. However, it reflects a common notion to maintain values and standards that can only be maintained by achieving global ethics.

In Hick's (1922-2012) view, pluralism is the only Meta theory that sees religions asking questions, radically to achieve a better future as he states; "religious pluralism questions the commonality of every religion, totalities consisting of distinctive ways, and experiencing the real. And the practical outcome is not that there should be a new global religion, the same for everyone, but that the adherents of each should respond to the ultimate, the real devoutly in their way."[1] Within Islamic history, precedents, such as the multi-confessional milieu of al-Andalus and the Ottoman millet system, demonstrate that Islamically grounded models of pluralism can sustain social harmony, which is why Hick's religious pluralism is applicable to minority and non-Western Christian religions as well. Contemporary Muslim-majority societies, however, face novel pressures; needless to say that the political instrumentalization of religion, identity-based polarization, and competing legal-ethical paradigms all demand fresh articulations of pluralism that speak to present realities.

Religious diversity is an undeniable fact that can only be understood and interpreted to validate religious pluralism that has different inclusion and exclusion based on distinct cultures, especially Asian culture.[2] In the preceding years, a strong attention has been given to religious diversity that is increasing in both scope and significance. Researchers have incorporated various theological and philosophical frameworks to understand the undermining perspective of religious diversity and religious pluralism.[3] Religious pluralism, religious plurality, and religious diversity are all connected concepts; however, they have distinct conceptual applicability. As of 2010, approximately 84% of the world's population was affiliated with a religion; this proportion is projected to rise to 87% by 2050.[4] Pew Research Center projections indicate that by mid-century, there will be near parity between Muslims (2.8 billion, 30% of the world population) and Christians (2.9 billion, 31%[5] potentially for the first time in history. In Hick's view it is a traditional affirmation to implicitly and explicitly accept superiority of one's religion that are always seen in our own 'traditional dogmas.'[6] Such demographic shifts are taking place amid persistent interfaith tensions. A 2021 global study found that 28% of countries impose "high" or "very high" government restrictions on religion, and 22% experience high levels of social hostilities involving religion.[7]

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[1]Sharada Sugirtharajah, *John Hick's Religious Pluralism in Global Perspective* (Springer Nature, 2023); John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* 2nd ed. (Yale University Press, 2004).

[2]Sugirtharajah, *John Hick's Religious Pluralism in Global Perspective*; Wi Yip Wong, "Reconstructing John Hick's Theory of Religious Pluralism: A Chinese Folk Religion's Perspective," PhD Dissertation (University of Birmingham, 2011) https://scispace.com/pdf/reconstructing-john-hick-s-theory-of-religious-pluralism-a-29p2hq72py.pdf

[3]Akeem Olayinka Kazeem, and Fatmir Shehu, "Analyzing John H. Hick's Religious Pluralism and Its Implications from Islamic Ethical Perspectives," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 13 (2), (2023): 178–194. https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.132.12; Neelam Bano, Humaira Ahmad, "Religious Pluralism: The Perspective of Twentieth Century Muslim Perennial Philosopher Frithjof Schuon," *Al-Qamar* 3, 1(Jan-Jun2020): 1-16.

[4]Pew Research Center, "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050," April 02, 2015, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/

[5]Muhammad Ali, "Religious Pluralism and Freedom in Islam," in *Freedom of Religion and Religious Pluralism*, eds., Md. Jahid Hossain Bhuiyan, and Carla M. Zoethout (Brill | Nijhoff, 2023), 36-56, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004504967_004

[6]Sugirtharajah, *John Hick's Religious Pluralism in Global Perspective*.

[7]Pew Research Center, "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050," April 02, 2015, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/; Pew Research Center,

Noticeably, Islam has been declared the fastest-growing religion globally because of its general and universalised meaning and diverse interpretations. Scholars have declared Islam a universal religion for humankind based on several Qur'ānic revelations, which emphasize the meaning and existence of Muslims in relation to God.[8] Thus, the construction and contestation of Muslims relies on the pluralistic notion of transcendental reality, which allegorically believes that God has a transcendental reality of being pluralistic in names that signify faith and sincerity of religion. The second half of the 20th century has indicated that nearly half of the conflicts revolve around religious convictions that lead to religious diversity. Religious diversity exists whenever seemingly sincere, knowledgeable individuals hold incompatible beliefs on the same religious issues.[9] Diversity of this sort leads to various theistic systems. Upon examining such theistic systems, particularly Christianity and Islam, people tend to discuss multiple issues, including the nature and existence of God.[10] In their works, philosophers John Hick (1922–2012), Jerome Gellman (b. 1945), Alvin Plantinga (b. 1932), William Wainwright (b. 1935), and Philip L. Quinn (1940–2004) highlight two key viewpoints worth examining: "exclusivism" and "pluralism." They argue that holding different religious beliefs often sharpens disagreements between faiths, and in today's multicultural societies, religious pluralism has become a leading framework for understanding those differences.[11]

Hans Küng rose to prominence through his advocacy of interreligious understanding and a shared moral foundation for humanity. His landmark initiative articulated most explicitly in the 1993 "Declaration toward a Global Ethic," drafted for the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, distills a *minimal consensus* of core values found across religious and ethical traditions.[12] Küng framed four fundamental commitments, sometimes referred to as four "irrevocable directives" of the Global Ethic: (a) Non-violence and respect for life, which is a commitment to a culture of ahimsa (non-harm) and reverence for life. (b) Justice and solidarity, which is a commitment to economic and social justice, including fair distribution of resources, concern for the poor and marginalised, and solidarity across group lines. (c) Truthfulness and tolerance which is a commitment to honesty, transparency, and the ethos of tolerance in public and private life. (d) Partnership and equal dignity (particularly between men and women), it presents a commitment to equal rights and mutual respect in relationships, highlighting gender equality as a universal ethical norm[13] as in the Qur'ānic assertion, "We created you from a male and a female…,"[14] implying the same origin and worth.

"Globally, Government Restrictions on Religion Reached Peak Levels in 2021 While Social Hostilities Went Down," March 05, 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2024/03/05/globally-government-restrictions-on-religion-reached-peak-levels-in-2021-while-social-hostilities-went-down/

[8]Muhammad Ali, "Religious Pluralism and Freedom in Islam," 36-56.

[9]David Basinger, *Religious Diversity – A Philosophical Assessment* (London: Routledge, 2021), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315244655; Pew Research Center, "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010–2050," April 02, 2015, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/

[10]David Basinger, *Religious Diversity – A Philosophical Assessment*

[11]David Basinger, *Religious Diversity*.

[12]Hans Küng, and Karl-Josef Kuschel, *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions* (London: SCM Press, 1993).

[13]Hans Küng, and Karl-Josef Kuschel, *A Global Ethic*; Hans Kung, (ed) *Yes to a Global Ethic* (Continuum Intl Pub Group, 1966).

[14]Al Hujurat 49:13.

The current study aims to articulate an integrated model of religious pluralism and coexistence drawing upon three streams: (1) Qurʾānic and Prophetic foundations for pluralistic engagement (e.g. the proclamation "no compulsion in religion," Q 2:256, [15] and recognition of *Ahl al-Kitāb* or People of the Book); (2) classical and modern *fiqh* discourses, especially *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* (higher objectives of Islamic law) that emphasize universal human dignity and common good; and (3) Hans Küng's Global Ethic, with its emphasis on non-violence, justice, truthfulness, and partnership as universally shareable values. By juxtaposing these streams, the study aims to propose a synthesized "Global-Maqāṣid Ethic." Ultimately, the current study aims to demonstrate that an Islamically grounded pluralism can be harmonized with global ethical norms to produce a more just and peaceful social order. The research employs a qualitative approach, such as comparative hermeneutics, entailing close textual analysis of key sources, including selected Qurʾānic verses and Prophetic traditions on other faith communities, classical *fatwā* literature on *dhimmī* (protected minority) arrangements, and Hans Küng's major works – *Global Responsibility* (1991) and the *Declaration toward a Global Ethic* (1993) – to extract core principles and dialogical methodologies.

The study is divided into multiple sub-sections, such as Section II provides a literature review of Islamic theological perspectives on pluralism and comparative interfaith ethics. Likewise, Section III discusses Islamic scriptural, juridical, and philosophical foundations for pluralism. Section IV analyses Hans Küng's approach to interreligious dialogue and his Global Ethic principles. Section V offers a comparative analysis, highlighting convergences and tensions between Islamic and Küngian frameworks, and introduces the proposed *Global-Maqāṣid Ethic*. Section VI draws conclusions and implications for theory and practice, suggesting ways forward for embedding a Global-Maqāṣid Ethic in institutional and grassroots initiatives.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Islamic Foundations of Pluralism – Classical Perspectives

Islamic scripture and early history provide a substantial foundation for pluralistic theology. The Qur'ān engages religious diversity in numerous verses, emphasizing both freedom of belief and the value of communal differences. A cornerstone is the verse "There is no compulsion in religion,"[16] which unequivocally prohibits forced conversion and, by extension, enshrines a principle of religious liberty. Another oft-cited verse teaches that humanity was created diverse "into nations and tribes, so that you may know one another"[17] suggesting divine wisdom in pluralism. Early Islamic practice under the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) reinforced these principles: the Constitution of Medina (622 CE) recognized the Jewish tribes of Medina as an umma alongside Muslims, granting them religious autonomy and equal protection. This charter[18]

[15] Al Baqara 2:256.

[16] Al Hujurat 49:13; Al-Baqara 2:256.

[17] Al-Hujurat 49:13.

[18] Fred Donner, *Muhammad and the Believers: At the Origins of Islam* (Harvard University Press, 2010), 227; R. B. Serjeant, "The Constitution of Medina," *Islamic Quarterly*. 8 (1964): 3–16; R. B. Serjeant, "Sunnah Jāmi'ah, Pacts with the Yathrib Jews, and the Tahrīm of Yathrib: Analysis and Translation of the Documents Comprised in the So-called 'Constitution of Medina'," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 41 (1), (1978): 1-42. doi:10.1017/S0041977X00057761; Muhammad Hamidullah, *The First Written Constitution in the World* (Lahore: Ashraf Press, 1941), https://dn790006.ca.archive.org/0/items/THEFIRSTWRITTENCONSTITUTIONOFTHEWORLD/THE%20FIRST%20WRITTEN%20CONSTITUTION%20OF%20THE%20WORLD.pdf

is often heralded as an example of civic pluralism in a religiously diverse state.[19] Indeed, the *Medina Charter* depicts that pluralism was "advanced and instated in Medina" through mutual respect and a denouncement of religiously- motivated war.[20] Scholarly research has confirmed that the Qur'ān "in its entirety provides ample material for extrapolating a pluralistic and inclusive theology of religions."[21] Classical jurists later codified the status of non-Muslims under Muslim rule via the *dhimma* system, which, despite its inequalities (e.g. the *jizyah* tax), was built on an ethic of protection: *dhimmī* communities were guaranteed security (*amān*), internal autonomy, and rights to worship according to their faith. Pioneering works like Abu Yusuf's (729-798) *Kitāb al-Kharāj* and al-Māwardī's *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyya* outlined the aforementioned protections. The theory of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* (objectives of law), articulated by Imām al-Juwaynī (1028-1085), and later al-Shāṭibī (1320-1388), further supported pluralism: among the universal objectives of Islamic law are the preservation of life, faith, and honour for all citizens, for both Muslim and non-Muslim. In other words, classical scholars saw public order and justice as goods that transcend confessional lines. Modern scholars like Abdulaziz Sachedina argued that an "inclusive theology of religions" can be directly derived from the Qur'ān and Prophetic tradition, noting that Islam's sacred texts *"provide ample material"* to ground pluralism.[22] Sachedina and others also highlighted that episodes of historical intolerance were often products of particular political contexts rather than inherent religious mandates, suggesting that the Islamic tradition is amenable to re-reading in favor of equality and mutual coexistence.[23]

2.2. Interfaith Pluralism in Western Thought

The concept of pluralism as an actively positive value (not merely passive tolerance) has been extensively explored by Western theologians and ethicists, which provides a useful comparative backdrop. In *An Interpretation of Religion* (1989), Hick posited that "each world faith is a separate culturally conditioned way in which the Ultimate Reality can be experienced."[24] These traditions can be called "alternative soteriological spaces" within which people find salvation or liberation.[25] Hick's pluralism (sometimes called "Real-centric" pluralism) provided a philosophical foundation for respecting all faiths as potentially true and salvific—a clear contrast to exclusivist positions that reserve truth or salvation to one's community[26] work on the Pluralism Project at Harvard documented how interfaith engagement in America was creating a new paradigm of religious relationship: moving from mere tolerance to positive appreciation of others. In ethics, Hans Küng (b. 1928) took a global approach, seeking common ground across religions

[19]Jasser Auda, *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (London: IIIT, 2008).

[20]Lukman Harees, "Lessons on Tolerance and Pluralism: From the Holy Prophet of Islam," *Colombo Telegraph*, December 25 2015, https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/lessons-on-tolerance-pluralism-from-the-holy-prophet-of-islam/

[21]Glyn Richards, *Towards a Theology of Religions* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 1-23, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-24147-7_1

[22]Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 23–26.

[23]Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* 23–26.

[24]John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* 2nd ed. (Yale University Press, 2004).

[25]Farid Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997).

[26]Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Became the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: Harper, 2001).

on the basis of Vatican Council II declaration of Church relation with non-Christian Religions.[27] Frustrated by intra-Christian and interreligious conflicts, Küng famously declared, "No peace among nations without peace among religions. No peace among religions without dialogue between religions."[28] He spearheaded the drafting of the "Declaration Toward a Global Ethic," for the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions. This declaration, endorsed by leaders of diverse faiths, identified core moral commitments shared across traditions. Küng's approach differs somewhat from Hick's: rather than explore into theology of truth, it focuses on ethics finding a "minimal consensus" on values for humanity.

3. Islamic Theological and Ethical Basis for Pluralism

3.1. Qurʾānic and Prophetic Principles

The foundational texts of Islam articulate a clear vision of religious diversity as part of the divine design. As mentioned, "There is no compulsion in religion"[29] (establishes both a legal and ethical prohibition against coercion in matters of faith; thereby, opening space for genuine choice and mutual respect. The Qurʾān also explicitly acknowledges other monotheistic communities: Christians and Jews are honored as "People of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*), sharing in the Abrahamic heritage. This is why believers are instructed to engage with them in thoughtful dialogue: "Say: O People of the Book! Come to a common word between us and you…"[30] "Do not dispute with the People of the Book except in the best manner…"[31] These verses mandate that Muslims relate to Jews and Christians based on a shared scriptural monotheism, highlighting common values while upholding *tawḥīd* (belief in one God. Likewise, the Prophet's famous encounter with the Najrānite Christian delegation (as recorded by Ibn Hishām in his *Sīrah*) demonstrated a willingness to discuss theological differences openly and peacefully. According to chroniclers, the Christians of Najrān were even allowed to pray in the Prophet's Mosque, a gesture of hospitality and recognition. Collectively, these scriptural and historical precedent present a true picture of pluralism, one that values religion and imperative justice (*ʿadl*). "Had God willed, He could have made you one community, but [He has not] to test you in what He has given you. So, compete with one another in good works."[32] This suggests that diversity is divinely willed and meant to spur mutual *betterment* rather than conflict.

3.2. Classical Jurisprudential Positions

In the formative centuries of Islamic civilization, jurists developed a framework for managing pluralism within an Islamic polity through the concept of *ahl al-dhimma* (protected people). Under the *dhimma* contract, non-Muslims (typically People of the Book, and later others by extension) under Muslim rule were granted security of life and property (*amān*), the freedom to practice their religion, and a degree of legal autonomy in exchange for a tax (*jizyah*) and recognition of Muslim political authority. Classical scholars, such as al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) and al-Māwardī (d. 1058) situated

[27]Vatican Council II, "Nostra Aetate: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," (Catholic Church document on interreligious respect), October 28, 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

[28]Hans Kung, *Christianity: Essence, History, and Future* (Continuum Intl Pub Group, 1996).

[29]Al Baqara 2:256.

[30]Aal-e-Imran 3:64.

[31]Al-Ankabut 29:46.

[32]Al-Maida 5:48.

the *dhimmī* system within a broader ethical framework that emphasized communal coexistence. In *Al-Aḥkām al- Sulṭāniyya,* al-Māwardī highlights that the ruler has to uphold the rights and welfare of *dhimmī* subjects, indicating that justice is not confined to Muslims alone.

Significantly, the theory of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* (the higher objectives of *sharīʿah*) later articulated by al-Juwaynī (d.1085), al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), and systematized by al-Shāṭibī (d. 1388) provides a moral lens to evaluate these laws. The five classical *maqāṣid* include the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-ʿaql*), lineage/honor (*ḥifẓ al- nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). Some jurists even listed *ḥifẓ al-ʿird* (honor/dignity) as a core objective, reinforcing that the law must uphold human dignity across confessions.[33] Through this *maqāṣid* lens, the differential treatment in certain rulings (like *jizyah*) was not an end in itself but a means believed, in its context, to safeguard the overall order and well-being of society. Modern commentators revisiting *maqāṣid* have argued that any restrictions on non-Muslims in classical law were context-specific and should be reinterpreted if they conflict with the Islamic spirit of *raḥma* (mercy) and equity.

3.3. Modern Muslim Thinkers

The late 19th and 20th centuries witnessed concerted efforts by Muslim intellectuals to articulate pluralism in light of both Islamic revival and modern ideas of universal human rights. Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), a key figure of Islamic modernism, reinterpreted Islam's stance toward non-Muslims not as one of mere tolerated presence but of principled equality.[34] In his Qur'ān commentary [(*Tafsīr al-Manār*, with Rashid Rida 1865-1935)] and other writings, Abduh affirmed that Islam's true teachings support freedom of belief – pointing out that even the *jizyah* tax in early Islam was analogous to the military-exemption tax Muslims paid, rather than a demeaning penalty, and thus could be updated or abolished in a modern citizenship paradigm.

Fazlur Rahman (1919-1988), as noted, emphasized *ethical objectivism*: that the Qur'ān's social rulings aimed at establishing certain ethical norms in 7th-century Arabia (justice, equity, piety), and Muslims must *abstract* those objectives and fulfill them under current conditions. This line of reasoning directly opens space for full equality of citizenship irrespective of religion, since justice today is understood to require equal rights and non-discrimination. Rahman's influence on later Muslim thinkers has been profound, paving the way for maqāṣid-based legal reforms.[35]

Abdulaziz Sachedina builds on similar principles in contemporary scholarship, explicitly arguing that "religious liberty is the underpinning of all other liberties" in Islam (2001). He explored Qur'ānic verses like "Let him who will believe, and him who will, reject (the truth)"[36] to demonstrate the Qur'ān's recognition of plural paths. Mahmoud Mohamed Taha (1909-1985)

[33]Ahmad al-Raysuni, *Imam al-Shatibi's Theory of the Higher Objectives and Intents of Islamic Law*, trans., from Arabic by Nancy Roberts (London: The Institute of Islamic Thought, 2005), https://iiit.org/wp-content/uploads/Imam-Al-Shatibis-Book.pdf; Jasser Auda, *Maqasid-al-Sharia – An Introductory Guide* (London: The Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008), https://ia601209.us.archive.org/21/items/maqasid_guide-Feb_2008/maqasid_guide-Feb_2008.pdf; Marina Abu Bakar, and Ahmad Khilmy Abdul Rahim, "Maqasid Al-Shariah Theory: A Comparative Analysis Between the Thoughts of Al-Shatibi And 'Izz Al-Din Ibn 'Abd Al-Salam," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 11(8), 180–193.

[34]Muhammad Abduh, *Al-Islām wa'l-Niẓām (Islam and Governance)*. (Cairo, n.d.).

[35]Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

[36]Al-Kahf 18:29.

introduced an innovative hermeneutical approach by elevating the Qur'ān's Meccan message (universal, inclusive, spiritual) as the eternal core of Islam, while treating the Medinan legislation (including treatment of non- Muslims) as context-contingent.[37] Although Taha's ideas were controversial, they underscore a trend in modern Islam: a willingness to jettison historically conditioned rulings that seem incompatible with Qur'ānic universals and modern human rights. Tariq Ramadan, in addition to asserting the Qur'ānic basis for pluralist values, has been active in interfaith dialogue and emphasizes social pluralism.[38] The idea that Muslims must not only accept but also embrace living as one community among many in Europe and beyond. He often cites Qur'ān 49:13 about knowing one another as a guiding principle for Muslims in plural societies, and calls for *ijtihād* that can yield what he terms "Western Islamic jurisprudence," adapting Islamic law to minority contexts in a way that fosters pluralist coexistence.

4. Conceptualizing Religious Pluralism: A Küngian View

For Küng, genuine pluralism entails what he terms a "pluralism of encounter," as opposed to lesser forms of pluralism. He delineates three modes in which a religiously plural society might operate: (a) Pluralism of confrontation, where different religious groups coexist but in a state of rivalry or conflict, each asserting exclusive truth claims that lead to social and political clashes. In this mode, diversity exists but is seen as a problem (b) Pluralism of indifference, where multiple religions are present but each retreat into the private or communal sphere, indifferent to one another, and (c) Pluralism of encounter, the ideal form, wherein different faiths actively engage one another through dialogue, mutual learning, and cooperation. In this model, distinct identities are maintained. Küng's vision resonates with such instances where a society's diversity is integrated through dialogue and cooperation, rather than managed merely through top-down control.

4.1. Dialogue Methodology: The "Conversation of the Spirit

Küng emphasizes that achieving the pluralism of encounter requires methodical and sincere dialogue. He outlines a threefold dialectical process for interreligious dialogue, which he has described as a "conversation of the spirit": (a) Mutual self-understanding, (b) Mutual critique (or *Rechenschaft ablegen*, "giving account"), and (c) Collaborative action. In Küng's methodology, this *praxis* is vital: it is in addressing common challenges together that theological common ground is solidified and trust is built.[39] This methodology resonates strongly with the Prophetic model in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), after reaching accords like the Medina Charter, engaged in joint endeavors with the diverse tribes, such as forming mutual defense pacts and coalitions for public welfare (e.g. the earlier *Hilf al-Fuḍūl*, an alliance including pagans for justice in Mecca).[40]

4.2. Küng on the Role of Religious Leadership

Hans Küng assigns a pivotal role to religious scholars and leaders in advancing the global-ethical project. He has often lamented that theologians and clergy sometimes remain insular,

[37]Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, *The Second Message of Islam*, trans., Abdullahi An-Na'im (Syracuse University Press, 1987).

[38]Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[39]Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility – In Search of a New World Ethic* (Burns & Oates, 1993).

[40]Obaidullah Fahad, "Tracing Pluralistic Trends in Sīrah Literature: A Study of Some Contemporary Scholars," *Islamic Studies* 50 (2), (2011): 221; Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (1983), 31-32, https://www.icorlando.org/pdfs/muhammad_martin_Lings.pdf; Mahmood Ibrahim, "Social and Economic Conditions in Pre-Islamic Mecca," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14 (3) 1982): 355.

focused on internal dogmatic debates, while the world's crises demand their moral voice jointly. Küng calls for an "ecumenism of the spirit," that extends beyond Christian ecumenism to include all faiths. The implied methodological stance is humility: no community, including one's own, has all the answers, and each can learn from the other. This humility does not mean relativism (Küng does not ask anyone to surrender belief in their scriptures), but it does mean an openness to surprise and correction. The weight of this task is heavy, but Küng famously remarked: "No world peace without religious peace; no religious peace without religious dialogue."[41] It implies a responsibility on leadership to guide their flocks toward that dialogue and peace.

5. Comparative Analysis: Islamic and Küngian Frameworks

Hans Kung's (2002), *Tracing the Way: Spiritual Dimensions The World of Religions* states that the world of religion seems to be too vast even to survey. Despite the distinct starting points, Islamic ethical teachings and Hans Küng's Global Ethic converge on several[42] foundational moral imperatives that offer both ethical and societal guidance.[43] The Islamic framework is rooted in the Qur'ān, *Sunnah*, and Hadīth; however, Hans Kung's framework refers to global ethics as a principle derived from various religious, philosophical, and theological concepts. Non-violence and respect for life are central to both paradigms. The Qurʾān enjoins the sanctity of life emphatically: "Whoever kills a soul – unless for a legal retribution – it is as if he had slain all humanity; and whoever saves one, it is as if he saved all humanity."[44] This verse, often cited in Islamic discourse, establishes protection of life as a paramount value. It resonates directly with Küng's *First Principle*, which calls on all people and governments to reject violence and commit to reverence for life.[45]

Thus, a Muslim's faith is not complete if he does not wish for others' lives and well-being as he would his own. This spirit dovetails with the Global Ethic's emphasis on empathy and non-harm. "Help you one another in virtue, righteousness and piety; but do not help one another in sin and transgression.[46] The above verses state that Allah commands His believing servants to help one another perform righteous, good deeds and avoid sins. He (Almighty) forbids his servants to help another in sins and overstepping those who are performing good deeds. Secondly, justice and solidarity are featured prominently in both frameworks. In Islam, *ʿadl* (justice) is a central command of the Qur'ān, "God commands justice and excellence…"[47] and an attribute of God Himself. The *sharīʿah*'s overarching *maqāṣid* include social justice – for example, *zakāt* (almsgiving) institutionalizes economic solidarity, and many Qur'ānic verses implore fair dealing and support for the vulnerable (orphans, the poor, etc.). Hans Küng's *Second Principle*, analogously, calls for a just economic order and solidarity with all humans.[48] Likewise, he stresses that in a globalized world, economic and social inequalities are at the root of conflict, and thus a shared ethical stance must include commitment to fairness and mutual care. One can see the

[41]That we may All be one – Reflections on Unity, "No Peace In The World Without Peace Among the World's Religions," https://ecubishop.com/2015/12/01/no-peace-in-the-world-without-peace-among-the-worlds-religions/

[42]Hans Küng, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* (New York: Crossroad, 1991).

[43]Hans Küng, and Karl-Josef Kuschel, *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions*; Hans Küng, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[44]Al-Maida 5:32.

[45]Hans Küng, and Karl-Josef Kuschel, *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions.*

[46]Al-Ma'ida 5:02.

[47]An-Nahl 16:90.

[48]Hans Küng, and Karl-Josef Kuschel, *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions.*

overlap in specific terms: the Islamic notion of the *ummah* as a collective force "uplifts the good and forbids wrong" implies communal responsibility, which is quite akin to the ethic of global solidarity across nations in Küng's vision. Prophet (PBUH) stated, "Consult your heart. righteousness is that which makes the heart and the soul feel tranquil; wrongdoing is that which wavers in the soul, and moves to and fro in the chest, even though a legal opinion may have been given in its favour.[49]

In practice, both are championed by truthfulness and tolerance (or truth and respect). The Prophet Muhammad emphasized truthful speech as a mark of faith – one *ḥadīth* states, "Truth leads to piety and piety leads to Paradise… falsehood leads to vice and vice leads to the Fire." The Qur'ān commands honesty in testimony even "against yourselves or your kin."[50] Furthermore, while classical Islamic literature did not use the term "tolerance" in a modern sense, the practice of forbearance (*ḥilm*) and courtesy towards non- Muslims was considered virtuous; the Prophet stood up in respect for a passing Jewish funeral bier, saying the deceased was "a human soul." Küng's *Third Principle* not only upholds truthfulness (rejecting lies, propaganda, and moral hypocrisy) but also frames tolerance as essential to pluralism.[51] By tolerance, Küng and colleagues mean an active respect for the other's freedom and conscience. This echoes the Qur'ānic ethos of "no compulsion in religion"[52] and the Prophetic practices of engaging politely with those of other faiths.

Finally, both frameworks uphold partnership and equality in human relations, including genders and communal divides. Today, many Muslim scholars argue that gender equality is fully compatible with Islamic teachings of *justice and dignity*. Küng's *Fourth Principle* explicitly calls for partnership between men and women on equal footing. This includes equal rights in education, family, and public life. In the context of interreligious ethics, it also means challenging religiously justified patriarchy. Both would agree that practices like domestic abuse or denying women leadership are unethical. More broadly, partnership extends to all humanity: the Qur'ān's vision of different people getting to know each other[53] implies partnership across races and tribes, which is analogous to Küng's insistence that all humans, as members of a global community, must relate in a spirit of partnership rather than domination.

Table 1. Alignment of Hans Küng's Global Ethic Principles with Islamic Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah

Hans Küng's Global Ethic Principles	Islamic Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa	Commonality of Both Frameworks
Non-Violence and Respect for Life (Commitment to reverence life and abstain from violence)	*Ḥifẓ al-Nafs* (Preservation of Life) • A primary *maqṣid*; taking a life unjustly is a grave sin (Q 5:32). • Also, *ḥifẓ al-ʿird* (honor)	Sanctity of life; prohibition of killing and harm. Both frameworks abhor murder, terrorism, war, except in true self-defense.

[49]Muslim b Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, The Book of Virtue, Enjoining Good Manners, and Joining of the Ties of Kinship, chapter Meaning Of Righteousness And Sin, Hadith 16, https://sunnah.com/muslim/45/16; *Forty Hadith of an-Nawwawi*, https://sunnah.com/nawawi40:27

[50]An-Nisa 4:135.

[51]Hans Küng, and Karl-Josef Kuschel, *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions.*

[52]Al Baqara 2:256.

[53]Al-Hujurat 49:13.

Hans Küng's Global Ethic Principles	Islamic Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿa	Commonality of Both Frameworks
	implies protection of personal safety and dignity.	
Justice and Solidarity (Commitment to economic and social justice, support for the vulnerable)	*Ḥifẓ al-Māl (*Preservation of Property) and *Ḥifẓ al-Nasl* (Lineage/Family) • Ensure rights and welfare in society. • Islamic law's charity (*zakāt*) and welfare rules aim at social equity. Justice (*ʿadl*) is a core command	Social justice; concern for the poor and weak. Both demand fair distribution of resources and mutual care in community.
Truthfulness and Tolerance (Commitment to honesty, and to respect and understand those of different beliefs)	*Ḥifẓ al-ʿAql* (Preservation of Intellect) • Encourages truth-seeking and honesty (since lying corrupts intellect). • Islamic *adab* (etiquette) towards non-Muslims historically allowed religious discussion and coexistence (no compulsion in religion).	Truth and trust; freedom of belief. Both stress honesty in personal and public life, and endorse respectful coexistence with other faiths (acknowledging freedom of conscience).
Equality and Partnership Commitment to equal dignity of all, notably gender equality and partnership across divides	*Ḥifẓ al-Dīn* (Preservation of Religion) • applied universally implies each person's right to practice their faith • a kind of equality in spiritual dignity. Modern *maqāṣid* expansions include *karāma* (human dignity). • Early Islam's reforms improved women's status; contemporary Islamic discourse often cites "And the believers, men and women, are protectors of one another" (Q 9:71).	Human dignity and equal respect. Both frameworks affirm that no individual or group is inherently superior by birth – all are equal in humanity (male/female, Muslim/non-Muslim), deserving of partnership and rights.

Note: The above alignment illustrates that the ethical trajectories of Islam and Küng's interfaith vision complement each other.

6. Points of Tension between Religious Pluralism and Exclusivism

Several tensions have been noticed as points of tension among Muslim scholars. These points have highlighted that theological exclusivism and theological pluralism have been the point of tension among Kung's concept of openness to 'mutual enrichment', where religion has a monopoly of truth. In Kung's view, religions must consider themselves as one voice; however, Islam is considered a true path in all religions: "all three prophetic religions refer to the one God, the Creator of the world and the God of Abraham. However, it is significant that while Judaism takes its name from a people, 'Israel' (or from the tribe of 'Judah'), and Christianity is named after its central figure, 'Christ'(Jesus of Nazareth), Islam—from the Arabic verb '*aslama*,' 'to submit, hand oneself over, surrender' by its very name confesses none other than God: 'submission, handing over, surrendering' to God."[54] Another tension is language and framework: Küng's ethic is framed in secular-universal terms, whereas Islamic discourse is traditionally theocentric. A devout Muslim may ask: on what authority does a "global ethic" stand, if not God's explicit revelation? Küng's answer might be that these values *are* part of revelation, just pluralistically understood, but the framing can make Muslims wary of diluting their faith.

There can be a perception that pluralism (in Küng's and Hick's mode) veers toward relativism or syncretism, even if that's not intended. For example, Islamic theology's insistence on the uniqueness of the Qur'ān or the finality of Muhammad's prophethood sits uneasily with the idea of "equal validity" of all religions surah 53 states, "this fellow-man of yours (Muhammad) has not gone astray, nor he is deluded, and neither does he speak out of his own desire: that [which he conveys to you] is but a [divine] inspiration with which he is being inspired- something that a very mighty one has imparted to him: [an angel] endowed with surpassing power, who in time manifested himself in his true shape and nature, appearing in the horizon's loftiest part, and then drew near, and came close, until he was but two bow lengths away, or even nearer and thus did [god] reveal unto his servant whatever he deemed right to reveal. The [servant's] heart did not give the lie to what he saw: will you, then contend with him as to what he saw?[55] Many Muslims would ask: Does pluralism mean that we consider idol-worship or the denial of Prophets as equally true? Obviously, from an orthodox Islamic standpoint, there are clear theological boundaries; pluralism must operate at the level of *rights and ethics*, not theological truth per se. Küng's ethic, to be fair, does not ask religions to agree on doctrine, but the *public rhetoric* of global pluralism sometimes blurs into theology, which can raise tension with exclusivist truth-claims.

Addressing these tension points requires careful hermeneutics and contextualization. Islamic scholars engaged in interfaith work often distinguish between the eternal principles of the faith and their historical enactments. They might say: Yes, Islam is the final religion – meaning it confirms all previous truth and corrects errors, but that doesn't preclude others who haven't recognized it from being guided or saved by God's will. Some cite Qur'ānic verses like Q 2:62 or Q 5:69, which suggest that righteous Jews, Christians, and others who believe in God and the Last Day shall have reward, indicating that salvation is not automatically denied to non-Muslims. Others emphasize that Q 3:85's "Islam" can be interpreted generically as submission to God, which righteous people of any faith might have, even if they don't formally follow the Prophet Muhammad. On legal issues, the remedy from an Islamic standpoint is often *ijtihād* anchored in

[54]Hans Küng, *Islam* (Oneworld Publications, 2007).

[55]Karim Douglas Crow, "Hans Kung (trans. John Bowden): Islam: Past, Present and Future," *ICR Journal* 1 (3), (2010): 547–550. https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v1i3.741

maqāṣid: scholars have argued that equality (*musāwāt*) is a foundational objective of Sharia today, thus laws that created distinctions (for reasons that no longer apply) can be suspended or reformulated. For instance, *jizyah* in modern times could be understood not as a marker of inferiority but as analogous to any citizen's tax – and since Muslims also pay taxes, it loses its differentiating aspect. Countries like the Ottoman Empire in 1856 (*Hatt-ı Hümayun*) abolished *jizyah* and made military service.[56]

7. Toward an Integrated Model – The "Global-Maqāṣid Ethic"

Building on the convergences and mindfully navigating the tensions that are proposed as a "Global-Maqāṣid Ethic", an integrative paradigm synthesizing Islamic objectives (*maqāṣid*) with Küngian universalism is employed to understand the theoretical and practical concept of Kung's pluralism and global ethic. This model seeks to be *both* authentically rooted in Islamic theology and universally accessible. Key features of this proposed ethic include: Universal Ethical Charter: A common envision jointly crafted charter of values, developed by Muslim scholars in collaboration with leaders from other faiths (and secular ethicists), that articulates a minimal moral consensus in language resonant with both the Qurʾānic worldview and Küng's principles. For example, the charter might begin with: "In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, we affirm together – the inviolability of life, the dignity of each person, the obligation of justice and mercy, the honor of truth, and the equality of all men and women.[57] Such a document would deliberately draw on Qur'ānic terms like *ḥayāt* (life), *karāma* (dignity), *ʿadl* (justice), *raḥma* (mercy), and *ṣidq* (truth), alongside parallel terms from other traditions. The idea is to create an ethical vocabulary that rings true for a Muslim audience while being entirely in harmony with the Global Ethic's tenor.

7.1. Contextual Jurisprudence (Maqāṣid-Oriented Ijtihād)

The Global-Maqāṣid Ethic must be operationalized in the realm of law and policy through *ijtihād* guided by the higher objectives. This means revisiting classical rulings that impede pluralism and reinterpreting them to ensure full civic equality and human rights, *without* losing Islamic legitimacy. For instance, *dhimma* regulations, apostasy laws, and blasphemy laws would be re-evaluated. Scholars could argue, based on *maqāṣid*, that today the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*) is best achieved by guaranteeing freedom of religion for all, because faith by compulsion or fear is invalid. Likewise, the preservation of life and honor demands that all citizens, regardless of their faith, are protected from violence and discrimination. In practice, some countries have already moved in this direction (e.g. Jordan's reforms to remove identification of religion on national IDs, or Tunisia's law allowing interfaith marriages without requiring conversion). A *fiqh* council operating under Global-Maqāṣid principles could systematically review Islamic legal codes and recommend amendments in line with both sharia objectives and international human rights standards (which in many cases overlap greatly). The goal is a

[56]C. Çakmak, "Jizya," In M. Ustaoğlu, C. Çakmak, (eds) *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Islamic Finance and Economics* (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93703-4_169-1

[57]Reinardus L. Meo, Fauzia Gustarina Cempaka Timur, and Moch Afifuddin, "The Document on Human Fraternity For World Peace and Living Together: Perlawanan Terhadap Terorisme dan Komitmen pada Perdamaian Dunia," *Jurnal Ledalero* 23, no. 1 (2024): 42-58, https://doi.org/10.31385/jl.v23i1.363.42-58

jurisprudence of pluralism that is genuinely rooted in Islamic ethics yet meets today's expectations of justice.

8. Conclusion

In examining Islamic pluralism and Kung's global ethical discourse, the study is useful for Muslims and other communities who are trying to build interpretations based on religious pluralism and religious diversity, considering global ethics as a basic construction component of Muslim identity. The construction of the Muslim selves is truly based on the belief of submission to God, and the diversity of views that are given in the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, accompanied by Hadith. These are also considered authoritative in dealing with diverse and dynamic conditions. This multiplicity and multidimensionality of the Islamic religion showcase pluralism not only towards the religion but towards the communities as well. As a nascent idea, the current research considers the global *Maqasid* paradigm as a significant approach to understanding global *Maqasid* issues related to religious reasoning and expounding theological concepts to deal with relevant holistic issues. This study coincides with Hick's view that persists that there exists a singular ultimate reality, which is referred to as the only real being. By and large, it can be said that all religions are equally valid paths to the real one. This paper forefronts the aforementioned considerations, pertaining to one central point that with religious pluralism, one can guarantee peaceful coexistence and global ethics can be maintained.

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