

# Alike in Creation

A Comparative Study of the Rights of the Religious Other in  
Islam, Christianity, Hinduism & Buddhism

## **Authored by:**

- ◆ Ela Gandhi ◆
- ◆ Farha Iman ◆
- ◆ Ilia Veviurko ◆
- ◆ Joseph Ellul ◆
- ◆ Mohammad Sahhaf Kashani ◆
- ◆ Mujeeb Ahmad ◆
- ◆ Prasert Suksaskawin ◆
- ◆ S. Mostafa Daryabari ◆
- ◆ Vladimir Nikolaevich Rogatin ◆

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**Ela Gandhi**

The granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, a prominent peace activist, and an anti-apartheid figure in **South Africa**

**Imam Muhammad Ashafa**

A peace leader in Nigeria who turned from violent religious conflict to cooperation with Christians to create reconciliation

**Ilia Veviorka**

A university professor and humanities researcher in Russia, focusing on cultural and social interactions in Eastern Europe

**Pastor James Wuye**

A peace activist in Nigeria and the colleague of Imam Ashafa who transformed from an enemy in religious conflicts into a symbol of interfaith reconciliation

**Joseph Ellul**

A professor at St. Thomas University in Rome and responsible for interfaith dialogue, focusing on creating mutual understanding between Christianity and Islam

**Seyed Mostafa Daryabari**

The Cultural Attaché of Iran in South Africa, active in expanding intercultural relations and interfaith dialogues

**Karuna Mohan**

A close colleague of Ela Gandhi and an activist who promotes peace and spreads the teachings of non-violence based on Gandhi's legacy

**Mujeeb Ahmad**

A professor of history at the International Islamic University, Pakistan, and a researcher of intercultural and religious relations in South Asia

**Mohammad Sahhaf Kashani**

A professor at the Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy, director of the International Institute for Islam-Christianity Dialogue

**Dr. Prasert Suksaskawin,**

Dean of Faculty of Public Administration, Siam Technology University, Bangkok

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- ◆ **Authors:** Ela Gandhi, Farha Iman, Ilia Veviorka, Joseph Ellul, Mohammad Sahhaf Kashani, Mujeeb Ahmad, Prasert Suksaskawin, S. Mostafa Daryabari, Vladimir Nikolaevich Rogatin
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## Preface by the Conference President

In the present age, despite tremendous developments in science and technology, human life is confronted with deep and fundamental crises in the realm of meaning and ethics. Phenomena such as warmongering, neglect of the foundations of ethical life, pervasive anxiety, violation of human dignity, and instability of the family unit are rooted more in the absence of virtue and a crisis in value systems than in material deficiencies. In such a context, a return to the spiritual and ethical legacies of the divine religions is not an option, but an undeniable necessity for the salvation of contemporary humanity. Herein, Islam and Christianity, as two great and civilization-building religious traditions, are the bearers of the richest ethical repositories for guiding humankind toward peace, justice, and transcendence. However, the actualization of this immense potential is contingent upon establishing a “tradition of critical and constructive dialogue” between the elites and adherents of these two faiths—a dialogue whose purpose is not merely to resolve historical misunderstandings, but to achieve a profound comprehension of foundational principles and to mutually benefit from the accumulated wisdom within both traditions.

From another perspective, ethics—not as a collection of individual recommendations, but as the primary foundation of civilization and the consolidating pillar of social life—has always been at the core of revelatory teachings. The history of civilizations clearly attests that the flourishing and stability of societies have a direct correlation with their adherence to transcendent ethical principles, and that cultural decline and social collapse have always been preceded by moral decay. Both Islam and Christianity have

presented ethical virtues as the essence of religion and the ultimate purpose of prophetic missions. Concurrently, differences in perspectives on human nature, theological systems, and the interpretation of sacred texts have led to a diversity of approaches and ethical systems, which in turn provides a basis for precise comparative reflections and methodical dialogues. The ethical dialogue between Islam and Christianity is, in reality, an endeavor to discover common horizons and to attain an scholarly understanding of points of divergence, which will undoubtedly lead to enhancement of ethical life in human societies.

Therefore, the strategic importance of dialogue in the field of ethics, particularly between these two great traditions, is self-evident. This dialogue is not a mere exchange of views, but an epistemic process for discovering shared capacities and forging convergence in confronting the challenges of the contemporary world. It must be noted that this understanding does not seek to negate distinctions or to reduce one epistemic system to another; rather, it is an effort toward an empathetic and equitable understanding of perspectives in pursuit of realizing shared transcendent goals.

Of course, traversing this path is not without its challenges, from deep-rooted historical prejudices and fundamental disagreements on certain issues to a dearth of institutionalized mechanisms for effective dialogue. Nevertheless, these obstacles should not be regarded as an impasse; rather, they are themselves opportunities for deepening the discussions and innovating new methods on the path to mutual understanding and rapprochement. Overcoming these challenges requires the firm will and resolute determination of the intellectual elites and religious institutions on both sides.

Meanwhile, scholars and academic centers bear a momentous responsibility. Their duty is, on the one hand, to dispel misunderstandings through the presentation of precise and scholarly explications and, on the other, to pave the way for dialogue by creating academic spaces and promoting a culture of tolerance and scholarly fairness. Utilizing modern tools can also play a decisive role in promoting shared ethical values and presenting successful models of this interaction.

The International Conference on *Comparative Studies of Ethics in Islam and Christianity*, organized by the Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy, was a step toward the realization of this same lofty ideal. The fruit of this scholarly interaction

and profound understanding was the compilation and publication of a series of specialized volumes and significant works, each of which addresses an important dimension of practical wisdom in the realms of theory and practice. The outcome of those scholarly endeavors is now presented in the form of this collection to the community of scholars and thinkers. We are confident that your careful and critical reading will add to the richness of these discussions and pave the way for their further development.

In closing, we deem it necessary to extend our sincere gratitude to all the dignitaries and colleagues who assisted us in planning and holding this conference. In particular, the valuable efforts of the Academic Secretary of the conference, *Hujjat al-Islām wa-l-Muslimīn* Dr. Mohammad Sahhaf Kashani; the Head of the Department of Philosophy and Theology, Dr. Mohammed Soori; and the meticulous management of the Executive Secretary of the conference, Mr. Isa Babamir, who played a commendable role in bringing this scholarly initiative to fruition, are worthy of appreciation.

Furthermore, we extend our utmost gratitude to the esteemed authors of this work, who, with their profound research, have added to the scholarly richness of this collection.

It is hoped that by divine grace and through the efforts of esteemed professors and scholars, we will witness the compilation and publication of more joint works between the elites of the Islamic world and Christianity. Undoubtedly, such endeavors not only contribute to the advancement of knowledge in humanities but can also open a bright horizon for constructive interaction and peaceful coexistence among the followers of the divine religions.

**Mohammad Taghi Sobhani**

President of the Conference  
on Comparative Studies of Ethics in  
Islam and Christianity



## Foreword by the Academic Secretary of the Conference

### ❖ The Dignity of the Other: A Foundation for Global Coexistence

In today's interconnected world, adherents of different religions are in more direct contact with one another than ever before. This proximity provides an unprecedented opportunity for recognition, empathy, and cooperation. At the same time, if we lack an ethical perspective, this very proximity can lead to misunderstanding, mistrust, or even religious violence.

To overcome this danger, a return to the authentic sources of religions is essential, for the divine religions, contrary to narrow-minded interpretations, have always called for human dignity, dialogue, and coexistence with “the religious ‘Other’.” In the Islamic tradition, Imam ‘Alī states in his letter to Mālik al-Ashtar: You must extend your umbrella of compassion over all people, for they are of two kinds (إِمَّا أَخُوكَ فِي الدِّينِ، وَإِمَّا نَظِيرُكَ فِي الْخَلْقِ)—“*immā akhun laka fī al-dīn, wa immā naẓīrun laka fī al-ḥalq*”—“either a brother to you in religion, or a counterpart to you in creation” (*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 53). This perspective is founded upon human dignity, a dignity that God, in the Holy Qur'an, has ascribed to all human beings without exception: (وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ—*wa-laqad karramnā banī Ādāma*)—“And We have certainly honored the children of Adam” (Qur'an 17:70).

In the Holy Bible, this call to interact with others is also seen with clarity. In the Epistle to the Romans, it is stated: “If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men” (Romans 12:18, ASV). This verse is not merely an ethical recommendation but an active command for dialogue and peace with “the ‘Other’.” In Hindu wisdom, the ancient teaching of “*Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam*” emphasizes that “the entire world is one family”—an expression of the oneness and shared destiny of the human race.

From the perspective of the Holy Qur’ān, this respect and dialogue are built upon a deeper understanding of humanity’s religious history. The Qur’ān emphasizes that prophets did not appear only in one specific region or for a particular people; rather: (wa-laqad ba’athnā fī kulli ʻummātī rāsūlā) —“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger” (Qur’ān 16:36). And also: (وَإِن مِّنْ أُمَّةٍ لَا يَخْلُو فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ) (wa-in min ʻummātī illā khalā fihā nadhīrun) —“and there was no nation but that there had passed within it a warner” (Qur’ān 35:24).

It can thus be said that the peoples of the entire world, including those in Africa, India, and China, have also benefited from the guidance of divine messengers in their history, and it is possible that God has not narrated the stories of all of them in the Qur’ān (cf. 4:164).

The present book is the product of a collaboration among thinkers from Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism who, by relying on shared human and divine values, endeavor to take a step toward formulating a charter for peaceful and ethics-centered coexistence. This collection is a response to the world’s urgent need for dialogue, mutual understanding, and the building of a more humane world founded on the dignity of all.

### ❖ The Dialogue of Religions: An Essential Path

In an era when prejudice, extremism, and identity politics have driven human societies apart and human dignity is neglected in the shadow of misunderstandings, dialogue among religions is not an elective choice but an urgent necessity for restoring empathy, recognition, and coexistence.

The great religious traditions—from Islam and Christianity to Hinduism—in their essence, call for love, compassion, and peace. A return to this shared essence is only

possible through a sincere and respectful dialogue among religions. This dialogue is a tool for rebuilding human trust and constructing an ethics-centered future for the world. The Holy Qur'an has also shown the way for this common thinking: قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَيْنَا كَلِمَةً سَوَاءٌ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ (qul yā Ahl al-Kitāb ta'ālaw ilā kālimatin sawā'in baynanā wa-baynakum)—"Say, 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you'" (Qur'an 3:64).

In the context of interreligious relations, this "equitable word" is none other than a shared commitment to human dignity, which transcends religious and ritualistic boundaries.

The fruits of interreligious dialogue are directly manifested in the improvement of social relations. By dispelling stereotypical and prejudiced views of "the Other," this interaction closes the path to extremism. By emphasizing shared values such as justice, kindness, and responsibility, it aligns and synergizes the moral power of religions to confront global crises—from war and discrimination to environmental degradation. Most importantly, dialogue offers a living model for promoting a culture of peace and friendship.

Nevertheless, many common methods of interreligious dialogue—such as conferences and specialized meetings—often remain confined to elites and lack a tangible impact on the daily lives of people. This collection endeavors to bridge this gap by transforming the results of these dialogues into a sustainable, accessible, and practical resource.

The primary goal is for the fruits of this interreligious engagement to extend beyond think tanks and academic circles and to reach the streets, schools, mosques, churches, and temples, where people live and build the future alongside one another. This writing is an invitation for all to participate: teachers, youth, civil activists, religious leaders, and every human being who envisions a more humane world filled with mutual respect.

#### ❖ The Conference on Comparative Studies of Ethics in Islam and Christianity

The Second International Conference on Comparative Studies of Ethics in Islam and Christianity was held in a period when human life is confronted by serious crises in the realm of meaning and ethics. This conference, organized by the Islamic Sciences

and Culture Academy in Qom, represents a practical step toward establishing a “tradition of constructive dialogue” between two great and civilization-building religions. It provided a platform for the shared ethical foundations and accumulated wisdom in the two rich Abrahamic traditions to be re-examined and drawn upon for mutual benefit with a deep and critical perspective. The significant presence of elites and intellectuals from various countries was a clear testament to the global importance of this dialogue.

With the participation of thinkers, researchers, and clergy from five continents and 25 countries, the conference displayed a remarkable geographical and cultural diversity, highlighting the international significance of interfaith dialogue and cultural peace. In addition to Iran, participating nations included India, Pakistan, Lebanon, and Qatar (Asia); Russia, Greece, Georgia, the Vatican, Spain, Malta, Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Germany, Austria, North Macedonia, and Serbia (Europe); Egypt, South Africa, and Nigeria (Africa); the United States and Venezuela (the Americas); and Australia (Oceania). Such extensive diversity—especially with the combination of senior Christian clergy (Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant) alongside Muslim scholars (Shia and Sunni)—demonstrates the special importance of this event in creating a global space for mutual understanding and the promotion of peace.

The fruit of this scholarly symposium is a collection of valuable works, each examining a dimension of practical wisdom in the realms of theory and practice. This collection explores foundational topics such as tranquility and the seven moral wisdoms, medical ethics, environmental ethics, family ethics, the relationship between humans and animals, the ethics of interacting with the religious other, major sins, noble moral traits, the virtue of good character, ethical bonds, and a positive global ethic within the Islamic and Christian traditions. In the social and political spheres, strategic issues such as the ethics of governance, the ethics of war and peace, patients’ rights, and the role of dialogue in preventing international conflicts were also comparatively analyzed.

To enrich the conference discussions, more than 30 pre-conference sessions, specialized commissions, and academic panels were held with the participation of Muslim and Christian intellectuals. These preliminary meetings, which took place in an atmosphere brimming with scholarly dialogue and mutual respect, provided

a valuable platform for the exchange of diverse perspectives and ideas, making the path of the main conference richer and more fruitful.

### ❖ Book Introduction

The book *Alike in Creation: A Comparative Study of the Rights of the Religious Other in Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism* presents an ethical charter for confronting the complex challenges of coexistence in the contemporary world, drawing upon the three great religious traditions of Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism. In an era when extremism, ignorance, and divisive policies threaten world peace and human dignity more than ever before, the neglect of the spiritual and ethical dimensions of human relations poses a serious danger. This book endeavors to open a new path for religious leaders, policymakers, researchers, and the general public by offering solutions grounded in fundamental ethical principles, so that in their intercultural and interreligious interactions, they may think beyond short-term political or sectarian interests.

The primary approach of this collection is comparative and inter-traditional, which re-examines the question of “the Other” within a moral and spiritual horizon by relying on the rich heritage of these three spiritual traditions. Each chapter of the book is dedicated to one of the dimensions of this topic, exploring the religious foundations and experiences in encountering the followers of other faiths with an analytical approach.

**1. Article: “The Principles of Coexistence with Followers of Other Religions from the Perspective of Islamic Sacred Texts”** This article examines the Islamic perspective on the rights and dignity of non-Muslims. Drawing from authentic Islamic sources such as the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the works of prominent theologians and jurists, the authors attempt to delineate a principled framework for religious coexistence in an Islamic society.

#### Authors:

- **Mohammad Sahhaf Kashani:** Assistant Professor at the Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy and Director of the International Institute for Islamic-Christian Dialogue of Iran.

- **Seyed Mostafa Daryabari:** Cultural Attaché of Iran in South Africa and an activist in the field of promoting intercultural relations and the dialogue of religions.

**2. Article: “The Ethics of Interaction with Followers of Other Religions: A Christian Perspective”** In this paper, the question of “the Other” is examined from the perspective of comparative theology and the philosophy of religion in Christianity. The author demonstrates how fundamental Christian doctrines such as love, grace, and salvation can be interpreted in relation to non-Christians, and what ethical and practical consequences this interpretation holds for the dialogue of religions.

**Author:**

- **Professor Joseph Ellul:** A priest, philosopher, and university professor from Malta, with distinguished scholarly contributions to the field of interreligious dialogue, particularly between Islam and Christianity. He was a member of the academic staff at St. Thomas University and a representative of the Catholic Church in several official forums for Islamic-Christian dialogue.

**3. Article: “Gandhian Beliefs Within the Hindu Faith as Part of the Ethics of Interaction with Those of Different Faiths”** This article draws upon the core principles of Hinduism to analyze the teachings of this religion regarding the acceptance of and respect for other religions. Citing Hindu sacred texts and the practical experiences of great leaders such as Gandhi, the author shows that the Hindu tradition takes an inclusive and pluralistic approach toward others.

**Author:**

- **Ela Gandhi:** A peace and human rights activist and politician from South Africa. She is the granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of Indian independence, and the founder of several organizations in the field of peace and dialogue among religions and cultures.

**4. Article: “Theory and Practices of Interaction with Followers of other religions in Islam and Christianity: A Study of South Asia”** This article takes

a comparative look at the perspectives of Muslim and Christian scholars in the South Asian region. By examining the religious discourse in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, the author analyzes the challenges and existing capacities for interreligious coexistence and demonstrates how different traditions have responded to the question of “the Other.”

**Author:**

- **Dr. Mujeeb Ahmad:** Former Head of the Department of History and Pakistan Studies.

**5. Article: “Ethical Grounds of the Attitude to the Non-Orthodox in Ancient Rus”** This paper examines the perspective of the Church and the state in pre-modern Russia toward other religions. By analyzing historical documents and the tradition of Orthodox Christianity, the author shows how the interaction between Christians and non-Christians was shaped in the context of power, politics, and religion, and what effect it had on the moral structure of society.

**Author:**

- **Dr. Ilia Veviurko:** Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Moscow State University and an Associate Professor at St. Tikhon’s Orthodox University of Humanities.

**6. Article: “The History, Development and Ethical Foundations of Interreligious Dialogue in Christianity”** This article examines the history of the dialogue of religions in the two traditions of Islam and Christianity.

**Author:**

- **Dr. Farha Iman:** A prominent Indian researcher in the field of interreligious dialogue, with a Ph.D. in the Philosophy and Theology of Dialogue from the Sophia University Institute in Italy. She is a co-founder of the Sarva Dharma Samvaad institution for promoting coexistence among religions.

**7. Article: “The History and Current State of Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Russian Orthodox Church”** This article is dedicated to the history and nature of dialogue-based relations between Islam and Christianity in Russia.

**Author:**

- **Vladimir Nikolaevich Rogatin:** Ph.D. in History and a professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Kazan Federal University. He presently serves as the Head of the Department of Islamic Studies at the Kazan Orthodox Theological Seminary.

**8. Article: “Multicultural Ways of Life and the Relationship Between Buddhists and Muslims in Thailand: An Analytical, Appreciative, and Methodological Study”** This article rejects the single global civilization concept, presenting multiculturalism and the Unity in Diversity model—exemplified by Thai Buddhist-Muslim coexistence—as the foundation for global peace. It leverages Islamic wisdom and Buddhist compassion to provide practical strategies for overcoming religious conflicts and fostering social cohesion within diverse communities.

**Author:**

**Dr. Prasert Suksaskawin:** Dean of Public Administration at Siam Technology University, is a prominent Thai scholar and an influential leader in the fields of governance and peace-building. As a renowned expert in interfaith relations, he serves as a key authority in analyzing civilizational ties and shaping cultural policies for pluralistic societies in Southeast Asia.

### ❖ Acknowledgements

The compilation of this collection and the fruition of this scholarly and cultural project are the result of collective effort, intellectual participation, and synergy among researchers from diverse religions, cultures, and nationalities. We deem it incumbent upon us to express our sincere gratitude to all those who played a role in the various stages of this work’s production.

The realization of this important endeavor is, in the first instance, indebted to the unstinting and instrumental support of Hujjat al-Islam wa-l-Muslimin Dr. Najaf Lakzaee, the honorable President of the Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy, and the scholarly leadership of Hujjat al-Islam wa-l-Muslimin Dr. Mohammad Taghi Sobhani, the High President of the conference. With their foresight and trust in the capacities of interreligious dialogue, they made the realization of this project possible.

We are also sincerely grateful for the effective collaboration and support of Dr. Mohammed Soori, Dr. Javad Danesh, and Hujjat al-Islam Isa Babamir, who, with their sincere support and contributions, paved the way for this scholarly endeavor.

This valuable work is indebted to the scholarly and intellectual efforts of its esteemed authors. Hereby, we express our thanks and appreciation to the thinkers and researchers who, with their knowledge and commitment, have enriched this collection. We extend our sincere gratitude to Hujjat al-Islam Dr. Seyed Mostafa Daryabari, Professor and Priest Joseph Ellul, the distinguished peace activist Dr. Ela Gandhi, Dr. Mujeeb Ahmad, Dr. Ilia Veviurko, Dr. Farha Iman, and Dr. Vladimir Nikolaevich Rogatin. The scholarly efforts of these dignitaries, which arise from diverse intellectual and religious traditions, have formed the cornerstone of this intercultural dialogue and have facilitated the realization of this book's objectives.

Furthermore, we express our gratitude to the honorable members of the Academic Committee and the esteemed Board of Reviewers, who, with their meticulousness and expertise, undertook the responsibility of the scholarly evaluation of these articles. The esteemed professors, Hujjat al-Islam wa-l-Muslimin Dr. Mahdi Alizadeh, Professor Mohammad Zia Tohidi, Dr. Yasser Pouresmaeil, and Hujjat al-Islam Dr. Seyyed Lotfollah Jalali, who, with their incisive perspective and valuable guidance, assisted in enhancing the quality of this work, are sincerely appreciated.

It is hoped that this work will be a small yet effective step on the path of deepening ethics-centered dialogue among the followers of religions, and an inspirational source for researchers, peace activists, and policymakers in building a more just world filled with mutual respect.

**Mohammad Sahhaf Kashani**

Academic Secretary of the International  
Conference of Comparative Studies of Ethics  
in Islam and Christianity