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Tafsīr and Meaning-Making in Contemporary Fatwa Production: Interfaith Greetings in Muslim–Non-Muslim Relations

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Abstract

The production of fatwas in the contemporary era faces a fundamental challenge: how can inherited textual authorities remain normatively authoritative while addressing social practices whose meanings have changed across historical and social contexts? This study examines how *tafsīr* (interpretation) and meaning-making mediate this challenge in contemporary Islamic legal reasoning by focusing on Egypt's *Dār al-Iftāʾ* (EDI) fatwa on *tahniʾah*, understood here as interfaith greetings directed toward non-Muslims on their religious festivals and occasions. Using qualitative textual analysis, the study does not treat *tahniʾah* as a fixed legal category. Instead, it investigates how its meaning is reconstructed through interpretive engagement with Qurʾanic ethical principles, Prophetic precedents, juristic plurality, historical circumstances, and contemporary interreligious relations. The findings demonstrate that the EDI reconfigures the normative meaning of *tahniʾah* through a layered interpretive process that distinguishes interfaith greetings from religious participation and theological affirmation, ultimately construing the practice primarily as social courtesy, goodwill, and civic coexistence. The study argues that *tafsīr* is constitutive of contemporary fatwa production because interpretation mediates between inherited textual authority and contemporary social reality, while meaning-making determines how emerging social practices become legally intelligible and classifiable. This study contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic legal discourse by reconceptualizing fatwa as a hermeneutic-juridical practice: interpreting authoritative texts within socio-historical contexts and determining which meanings become legally salient.

[*Produksi fatwa di era kontemporer menghadapi tantangan mendasar: bagaimana otoritas tekstual warisan masa lalu dapat mempertahankan otoritas normatifnya sembari menyikapi praktik sosial yang maknanya telah berkembang melintasi berbagai konteks sejarah dan sosial? Studi ini mengkaji peran tafsir dan proses pembentukan makna dalam memediasi tantangan tersebut dengan fokus khusus pada fatwa Dār al-Iftāʾ Mesir mengenai* tahniʾah*—yang dalam konteks ini dipahami sebagai ucapan selamat lintas agama yang ditujukan kepada non-Muslim pada hari raya dan berbagai perayaan keagamaan mereka. Dengan menggunakan metode analisis tekstual kualitatif, studi ini tidak memosisikan* tahniʾah *sebagai kategori hukum yang statis. Sebaliknya, studi ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana maknanya direkonstruksi melalui interaksi interpretatif dengan prinsip-prinsip etik Al-Qur'an, preseden kenabian, keragaman pandangan hukum, konteks sejarah, serta hubungan antar agama di masa kini. Temuan studi menunjukkan bahwa Dār al-Iftāʾ Mesir*

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merekonfigurasi makna normatif tahniʾah *melalui proses interpretasi berlapis yang membedakan antara ucapan selamat lintas agama dengan partisipasi dalam ritual keagamaan maupun afirmasi teologis; pada akhirnya, praktik ini diposisikan terutama sebagai bentuk kesalehan sosial, itikad baik, dan koeksistensi sipil. Studi ini berargumen bahwa tafsir merupakan elemen konstitutif dalam produksi fatwa kontemporer karena interpretasi menjembatani otoritas tekstual warisan masa lalu dengan realitas sosial masa kini, sementara proses pemaknaan menentukan bagaimana praktik sosial yang baru muncul dapat dipahami dan diklasifikasikan. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan diskursus hukum Islam kontemporer dengan merekonseptualisasi fatwa sebagai praktik hermeneutis-yuridis, yaitu menafsirkan teks-teks otoritatif dalam konteks sosial-historis serta menentukan makna mana yang menjadi dasar penetapan hukum.*]

Keywords: *Dār al-Iftāʾ*, Fatwa Production, Interfaith Greetings, Muslim–Non-Muslim Relations, *Tafsīr*, *Tahniʾah*.

Introduction

Contemporary Muslim societies are increasingly characterized by dense interreligious encounters in which Muslims and non-Muslims interact not only through formal institutions but also through everyday practices of kinship,[1] friendship,[2] citizenship,[3] and public life.[4] In these contexts, seemingly ordinary actions—such as wearing non-Muslim attire,[5] consuming certain food products,[6] celebrating interreligious festivals,[7] and participating in social occasions[8]—may become contested arenas for the negotiation of Islamic norms because their social meanings intersect with questions of religious identity and theological boundaries. This situation presents a significant challenge for contemporary fatwa production. Fatwas remain deeply anchored in authoritative sources, particularly the Qurʾan, Prophetic

1 Ilda Hayati et al., "Reimagining the Legal Framework for Interfaith Marriage in Indonesia: A Path Toward Inclusive Matrimonial Recognition," *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syari'ah dan Masyarakat* 25, no. 1 (June 2025): 307–22; Yayuk Whindari et al., "Negotiating Islamic Law and Religious Tolerance in Mixed-Marriage Families in South Korea," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum dan Syar'iah* 17, no. 2 (December 2025): 574–98; Ibnudin Ibnudin et al., "Reconstruction Interfaith Marriage Law in Indonesia: Relevance of Sociology Knowledge and Maqasid Sharia," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 25, no. 1 (June 2025): 70–86.

2 See: Torstein Try, *Muslim-Christian Friendships and Religious Change: Transformative Relationships* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025).

3 See: Anthony O'Mahony and Emma Loosley, eds., *Christian Responses to Islam: Muslim-Christian Relations in the Modern World* (Manchester New York: Manchester University Press, 2024).

4 Morgan E. Braganza and David R. Hodge, "Understanding Muslims' Interactions with Non-Muslims: Laying the Foundation for Culturally Sensitive Social Work Engagement," *Qualitative Social Work* 23, no. 6 (November 2024): 1041–57; Jörg Friedrichs, *Integration in Multicultural England: Community Relations between Muslims and Non-Muslims* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2025).

5 Makyun Subuki, Hilmi Akmal, and Syihaabul Hudaa, "Identity and Piety: Critical Discourse Analysis on Indonesian Ulema Council's Fatwa about the Law Using Non-Moslim Religious Attributes," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 23, no. 2 (December 2023): 423–48.

6 Ahmad Izudin et al., "The Coexistence of Halal Food Products in Non-Muslim Communities: Visiting Kupang Cases, Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 15, no. 6 (May 2024): 1560–82; Giyarsi, Iim Fahimah, and Miti Yarmunida, "Indonesian Ulema Council Fatwa on Boycotting Products Supporting Israel in the Ijtihad Discourse of Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah," *Nusantara: Journal of Law Studies* 2, no. 2 (December 2023): 156–67.

7 Ali Ahmed Zahir, "Muslim Jurists Debate on Non-Muslim Religious Festivals and Its Effects on Minority Muslims in the United States of America," *Intellectual Discourse* 26, no. 2 (December 2018): 765–84.

8 Mohammed Sabbar Taha et al., "Islamic Dealings with Non-Muslims in Their Religious Occasions," *Modern Applied Science* 10, no. 10 (June 2016): 55–61.

traditions, and the accumulated corpus of classical jurisprudence,[9] yet the social realities to which these sources are applied are neither static nor identical to those presupposed by earlier juristic formulations.[10] The urgency, therefore, lies not merely in determining whether particular interfaith practices are permissible, but in understanding how Islamic legal authority interprets changing social meanings while preserving its claim to textual and juristic legitimacy.

These challenges have generated several strands of scholarship on contemporary fatwa production. First, research examines fatwa as a form of institutional and religious authority,[11] emphasizing the changing roles of fatwa-making actors,[12] and exploring digital mediation through which Islamic legal opinions acquire and negotiate legitimacy.[13] A second strand investigates the methodological integration of Islamic legal concepts, such as *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* (the objectives of Islamic law) and *maṣlaḥah* (public interest), highlighting the selection and prioritization of juristic opinions and the balancing of textual evidence with the specific demands of contemporary issues.[14] A third strand of scholarship examines the challenges of translating fatwas into practice across diverse contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim contexts, particularly in relation to gender inequality,[15] Muslim diaspora communities,[16] power relations,[17] and changing financial needs.[18] Collectively, much of the

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9 Hussein Ali Agrama, "Ethics, Tradition, Authority: Toward an Anthropology of the Fatwa," *American Ethnologist* 37, no. 1 (2010): 2–18; Hadi Sofuoğlu and Iskandar Iskandar, "Constructing Legal Reasoning: A Historical Assessment of Fatwa Literature from the 4th to 19th Century," *Jurnal Fiqh* 22, no. 2 (December 2025): 262–92.

10 See: Omer Awass, *Fatwa and the Making and Renewal of Islamic Law: From the Classical Period to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

11 Mohd Harifadilah Rosidi, "Navigating Fatwa Governance: A Comparative Study of Institutional Centralisation and Religious Legitimacy," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* 9, no. 7 (2025): 3238–44.

12 Nor Ismah, "Women's Fatwa-Making in Indonesia: Gender, Authority, and Everyday Legal Practice," *International Journal of Islam in Asia* 4, nos. 1–2 (April 2024): 75–97; Nur Faizah et al., "The Role of Indonesian Women Ulama Congress (KUPI) in the Search for Gender Equality-Based Islamic Law," *Al-'Adalah* 21, no. 2 (December 2024): 323–46.

13 Amamur Rohman Hamdani, "Fatwa in the Digital Age: Online Muftī, Social Media, and Alternative Religious Authority," *Hikmatuna: Journal for Integrative Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (June 2023): 53–63.

14 Khairul Hamim, Lalu Supriadi bin Mujib, and Ahmad Muhasim, "Religious Fatwā and Human Security: Managing Public Health through the Lens of Islamic Jurisprudence in Indonesia and Saudi Arabia," *Khazanah Hukum* 6, no. 3 (December 2024): 234–50 Sanuri Sanuri et al., "A Maslahah-Based Review of MUI's Fatwa on Cryptocurrency: A Cognizant Human Perspective," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 25, no. 1 (July 2025): 43–66; Ahmad Bahauddin Am et al., "Rethinking Vasectomy Policy: MUI's Fatwas, Ethics, and Economic Coercion in West Java a Maqasid Syari'ah Analysis," *El-Mashlahah* 15, no. 2 (November 2025): 255–78; Faqiuddin Abdul Kodir and Zunly Nadia, "Hadith Interpretation from a Gender Perspective: Maqāṣid and Women's Experience in Indonesian Fatwas," *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum dan Syar'iah* 18, no. 1 (June 2026): 268–97.

15 Norita Kamaruddin et al., "Mufti's Views and Fatwa Authorities on Ihdad: Implementation Challenges among Working Women," *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research* 31, no. 1 (January 2026): 160–78.

16 Enes Ljevaković, "Religious Needs and Dilemmas of the Bosnian Diaspora as Expressed through Questions and Fatwas (Islamic Legal Opinions)," in *Both Muslim and European*, ed. Dževada Šuško (Leiden: BRILL, 2019), 165–80.

17 Alexandre Caeiro, "The Power of European Fatwas: The Minority Fiqh Project and the Making of an Islamic Counterpublic," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 3 (August 2010): 435–49.

18 Abdul Shakoor Dalvi, Md Faruk Abdullah, and Abu Bakkar Siddique, "Fatwa on Financial Needs in Non-Muslim Majority Countries: A Case on Mortgages and Insurance," *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research* 30, no. 2 (May 2025): 17–33; Yuli Agustina et al., "Legal Construction of Adaptive Resilience of MSMEs in

discussion continues to focus on the methodological principles employed or on how rulings adapt to context, rather than on the preceding interpretive process through which a contemporary social practice is constituted as a specific type of legal object.

Within the context of fatwa concerning interfaith greetings, existing scholarship has elucidated the complexity of external perspectives,[19] social impacts,[20] and the contestation of institutional authority.[21] However, these studies frequently concentrate primarily on—and begin with—the established legal status, the issuing entities, and the consequences of the fatwa decisions. Consequently, the process of meaning-making that precedes and enables the legal classification itself remains insufficiently examined. This assumption obscures a more fundamental hermeneutical question: how does a fatwa-producing institution determine what an act actually means before deciding what the law says about it? The issue becomes especially significant in interfaith relations, where the same external practice may signify religious affirmation, interpersonal courtesy, civic recognition, or peaceful coexistence depending on intention, historical circumstances, and social context.[22] These aspects reconstruct the relationship between textual evidence, classical juristic positions, historical circumstances, and contemporary citizenship in ways that transform the normative intelligibility of interfaith greetings. The critical gap, therefore, concerns not merely contextual fatwa, but the interpretive production of the meaning upon which contextual legal judgment becomes possible.

Against this background, this study investigates how Egypt's *Dār al-Iftāʾ* (EDI) employs interpretive engagement with Islamic textual and juristic sources to reconstruct the meaning of interfaith greetings and transform that meaning into contemporary legal normativity. It aims to identify the interpretive mechanisms through which Qurʾanic ethical principles, Prophetic precedents, classical juristic plurality, historical contextualization, and contemporary citizenship are assembled within the production of a fatwa concerning Muslim–non-Muslim relations. Through a qualitative analysis of EDI's fatwa, the article advances the concept of *tafsīr* (interpretation) as a constitutive dimension of contemporary

Emerging Markets: The Interaction of Financial Regulation, Organisational Governance, and Local Cultural Dynamics," *Nusantara: Journal of Law Studies* 5, no. 1 (May 2026): 485–508.

19 Moch. Ikwan et al., "MUI Fatwa on the Prohibition of Interfaith Greetings: Analysis of the Perspective of Postmodernist Social Theory in the Context of Plural Society," *Journal of Islamic Civilization* 6, no. 2 (February 2025): 206–18; Minhad Ali Yahya and Akhmad Rifa'i, "Strengthening Interreligious Communication: An Analysis of Interfaith Greetings in Fazlur Rahman's Hermeneutics of Hadith," *Wasilatuna: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 8, no. 2 (October 2025): 213–25.

20 Encep Taufik Rahman et al., "Intolerance in the Fatwa on the Prohibition of Interfaith Greetings: Its Impact on Islamic Family Law and Social Harmony," *Hikmatuna: Journal for Integrative Islamic Studies* 10, no. 2 (December 2024): 187–96; Encep Taufik Rahman et al., "The Dynamics of the Fatwa on the Prohibition of Interfaith Greetings: Maqasid al-Shariah and Its Implications for Multicultural Families in Indonesia," *Justicia Islamica* 22, no. 1 (June 2025): 25–48.

21 Muhamad Ali, "Between Faith and Social Relations: The Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama's *Fatwas* and Ideas on Non-Muslims and Interreligious Relations," *The Muslim World* 110, no. 4 (2020): 458–80; Rifqi Favian and Hanafi Arsyad, "Contesting the Discourse of Moderation: An Analysis of the MUI and Ministry of Religious Affairs' Arguments on Interfaith Greetings," *Ushuluna: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 11, no. 1 (June 2025): 49–63.

22 Achmad Yafik Mursyid, Muhammad Dzilfikri AlBaihaqi, and Alvy Ra'isatul Murtafi'ah, "Politics and Pluralism: Analyzing State Official Tafsir and Interfaith Discourse in Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 25, no. 1 (May 2024): 57–75.

fatwa production and develops meaning-making as an analytical lens for understanding the transition from inherited textual authority to contextual normativity. Its novelty lies in shifting attention from the outcome of fatwa to the interpretive architecture that produces that outcome, thereby conceptualizing contemporary fatwa as a hermeneutical-legal practice in which textual authority acquires contemporary normative force through the reconstruction of meaning.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative interpretive case-study design combined with textual and semantic analysis to examine how a bounded contemporary fatwa acquires legal meaning within its institutional and social context.[23] Rather than treating the fatwa merely as a legal document containing a predetermined ruling, the study approaches it as a discursive site where Qurʾanic texts, Prophetic precedents, juristic reasoning, interpretive operations, and contemporary social realities are brought into relation. Textual and semantic analysis are used to trace how key concepts, precedents, and juristic positions are selected, connected, prioritized, and assigned normative significance, recognizing that meaning is not simply given but constructed through linguistic, conceptual, and contextual interpretation.[24] Accordingly, the study does not evaluate the theological or juridical correctness of the ruling, but reconstructs the interpretive architecture through which interfaith greetings is rendered legally intelligible. The selected fatwa constitutes an information-rich case because it mobilizes multiple layers of inherited Islamic authority while addressing a concrete contemporary practice. The analysis therefore focuses on how textual authority is mediated through interpretation, historical context, intention, and contemporary social relations to transform inherited normative resources into a contextually intelligible legal judgment.

Case Selection

The study focuses on EDI's Fatwa No. 3644, entitled *Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi al-Aʿyād wa al-Munāsabāt* (The Ruling on Congratulating Non-Muslims on Their Festivals and Occasions), issued on 24 August 2016 under the authority of Grand Mufti Shaykh Shawqī Ibrāhīm ʿAllām.[25] The official record identifies the question as concerning the permissibility of social congratulations exchanged with non-Muslims, particularly within a context of everyday interaction involving neighbors, colleagues, and institutions in a non-Muslim society. The case is selected purposively because it is particularly suitable for examining the relationship between interpretation and contemporary fatwa production. First, the fatwa explicitly mobilizes several types of authoritative sources, including Qurʾanic verses,

23 See: Helen Simons, *Case Study Research in Practice* (Los Angeles; London: SAGE, 2009).

24 See: Paul Ricœur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, 1st ed, with Ted Klein (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976); R. Kunjana Rahardi et al., "The Power of Visual Communication: Analyzing Visual Multimodal Cybertext Contexts in Indonesian Cyber Pragmatics," *Jurnal Arbitrer* 12, no. 1 (March 2025): 54–68.

25 Refer to the EDI's fatwa which has been made available online at: Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi-al-Aʿyād wa-al-Munāsabāt, Fatwa No. 3644 (2016), https://www.dar-alifta.org/ar/fatwa/details/13237/.

Prophetic traditions, reports concerning the practice of early Muslims, and positions attributed to classical jurists. Second, it does not merely cite these materials but places them within a structured argument concerning social relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. Third, the fatwa directly addresses the historical circumstances underlying restrictive juristic positions and argues that changes in social reality affect the contemporary normative assessment. Specifically, it explicitly addresses the contemporary condition of citizenship and the intensification of social dynamics.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeds through a sequence of interconnected stages designed to analyze the meaning-making processes grounded in textual interpretation and historical-legal experiences. First, source identification and classification are undertaken to establish the textual architecture of the fatwa. All Qurʾanic verses, hadith reports, historical narratives, exegetical references, juristic authorities, and explicit references to social or historical circumstances are identified and classified according to their source type and argumentative location. Second, interpretive mapping identifies the argumentative function of each source and the relationships established among different sources. At this stage, attention is given to whether the fatwa uses a source to establish a general principle, provide a precedent, restrict or qualify another position, support an analogy, establish historical context, or reinforce an already developing normative argument. Third, semantic analysis examines how the key concepts and the social practice under consideration are framed. It examines how these concepts are connected to the act of congratulation and, crucially, how the social meaning of congratulation is distinguished from theological affirmation or participation in religious ritual. Finally, contextual analysis examines how the fatwa differentiates between the historical circumstances underlying restrictive juristic positions and contemporary circumstances. The analysis therefore compares the historical context invoked by the fatwa—particularly conditions of conflict, political hostility, and the close association between religious festivals and antagonistic relations—with the contemporary context characterized by citizenship, social proximity, and routine interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Egypt's Dār al-Iftāʾ and Its Fatwa on *Tahniʾah*

Fatwa No. 3644 issued by EDI, titled *Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi al-Aʿyād wa al-Munāsabāt*, is organized into six principal sections: *al-Suʾāl* (Question), *al-Jawāb* (Answer), *al-Muḥtawiyāt* (Contents), and *al-Khulāṣah* (Conclusion). The *al-Muḥtawiyāt* section is further subdivided into four thematic discussions. These encompass the Islamic directive to exhibit benevolence toward others; the legal ruling regarding congratulating non-Muslims on their festivals and occasions, supported by evidentiary sources; the categorization of such congratulatory acts as a manifestation of commendable character encouraged within Islamic teachings; and an analysis of the motivations and contextual factors that have led certain jurists to prohibit congratulating non-Muslims. Table 1 illustrates that the fatwa presents its legal reasoning in a systematic manner, commencing with a question-and-answer format, followed by thematic elaboration, and concluding with a succinct summary. Consequently, the fatwa determines that offering congratulations to non-Muslims on their festivals and

occasions is legally permissible, provided that such actions do not entail participation in religious rituals or practices that contravene Islamic principles.

Table 1
The Structure of EDI's Fatwa No. 3644

Fatwa Component	Arabic Heading	Primary Focus
Question	السؤال	Presents the question concerning *tahniʾah* toward non-Muslims on their festivals and occasions: What is the Islamic ruling regarding offering congratulations to non-Muslims on their religious festivals and occasions?
Answer	الجواب	Provides the initial legal response to the question: There is no legal impediment to doing so; Islam is entirely a religion of peace, mercy, benevolence, and maintaining social ties. It commands its followers to show kindness to all people and does not forbid them from showing benevolence toward non-Muslims, maintaining relations with them, giving them gifts, or accepting gifts from them.
Contents	المحتويات	Contains the substantive legal discussion, organized into four thematic sections: the Sharia's encouragement to show benevolence toward people; the evidence regarding the ruling on congratulating non-Muslims on their Religious festivals and occasions; congratulating non-Muslims on their religious festivals as an expression of exemplary character encouraged among Muslims; and explaining the reasons behind the Jurists' position on the impermissibility of congratulating non-Muslims
Conclusion	الخلاصة	Summary of the fatwa's legal position: It is therefore permissible under Islamic law for Muslims to congratulate non-Muslims on the festivals and occasions they celebrate, as this constitutes a form of social participation with them.

Source: Authors' elaboration, 2026.

Reframing Qurʾanic Normativity: From Ethical Principles to Interfaith Relations

EDI's argument begins not with a Qurʾanic verse that explicitly regulates greetings of congratulating non-Muslims on their religious festivals or occasions, but with a broader set of Qurʾanic ethical principles concerning good conduct toward people and peaceful relations with non-Muslims. The fatwa first characterizes Islam as a religion of peace (*al-islām dīn kulluh salām*) and then supports this characterization through several Qurʾanic passages.[26] Among them are Qurʾan 2:83, which commands believers to "say good" to people; Qurʾan 16:90, which commands justice and benevolence (*iḥsān*); and, most directly, Qurʾan 60:8, which states that God does not prohibit Muslims from showing kindness (*birr*) and fairness (*qisṭ*) toward those who have neither fought them on account of religion nor expelled them from their homes. The fatwa subsequently places visiting, giving gifts, maintaining relations, and congratulating non-Muslims within the general category of *iḥsān*.[27] This configuration is

[26] Refer to the "Answer" section of the fatwa Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi-al-Aʿyād wa-al-Munāsabāt.

[27] Refer to the "Content" subsection titled "Ḥaththh al-Sharʿ ʿalā al-Iḥsān ilā al-Nās (The Sharia's Encouragement to Show Benevolence Toward People)" within the referenced fatwa within the referenced fatwa Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi-al-Aʿyād wa-al-Munāsabāt.

significant because none of these Qurʾanic verses explicitly address the practice of congratulating non-Muslims on their religious festivals or occasions. EDI identifies general Qurʾanic principles concerning ethical conduct and interreligious relations and extends their normative scope to a specific contemporary social practice.

Table 2

Reframing Qurʾanic Normativity in EDI's Fatwa on Interfaith Greetings

Qurʾanic Source	Key Concept	Normative Meaning	Interpretive Operation	Meaning-Making of *Tahniʾah*
Qurʾan 2:83	*Qūlū li al-nās ḥusnan* (speak kindly to people)	Good and kind speech toward people	Interprets the general category people inclusively rather than restricting it to Muslims	Interfaith greetings can be understood as a form of kind and appropriate speech
Qurʾan 16:90	*Al-ʿadl* (justice) and *al-iḥsān* (benevolence)	Ethical excellence, justice, and benevolent conduct	Moves the verse from a general ethical injunction toward a framework for social conduct	Congratulating non-Muslims can be situated within benevolent social interaction
Qurʾan 60:8	*Al-birr* (kindness) and *al-qisṭ* (and fairness)	Permission to treat peaceful non-Muslims with kindness and fairness	Identifies peaceful non-Muslims as legitimate recipients of positive Muslim conduct	*Tahniʾah* is classified as a possible manifestation of birr toward peaceful non-Muslims
Combined Qurʾanic Framework	*Ḥusn al-qawl, iḥsān, birr, qisṭ,* and neighborly conduct	Good speech, benevolence, kindness, fairness, and social responsibility	Semantic aggregation: separate Qurʾanic concepts are assembled into one normative field	*Tahniʾah* is reframed from a potentially religious act into benevolent social courtesy

Source: Authors' elaboration, 2026.

Qurʾan 2:83 is particularly important in this respect. The command "*qūlū li al-nās ḥusnan*" (speak good words to people) employs the general category of *al-nās* (people). Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī explicitly maintains that the command is addressed to people in general and regards this reading as the stronger position, supporting it with Qurʾanic examples of speaking gently even to those outside the Muslim community since there is no harm in treating people kindly through good speech (*kāna mutaʿalliquh bi al-nās ʿumūman idh lā ḍarar ʿalā al-insān fī al-iḥsān ilā al-nās bi al-qawl al-ṭayyib*).[28] Likewise, Qurʾan 16:90, as interpreted by al-Qurṭubī, established an ethical framework that extends to human relations. Al-Qurṭubī understands *al-iḥsān* as encompassing the good that people extend to one another, emphasizing that God loves human beings and acts benevolently toward one another (*fa-innahu taʿālā yuḥibb min khalqih iḥsān baʿḍihim ilā baʿḍ*).[29] Qurʾan 60:8 provides a normative category of non-Muslims who do not fight Muslims on account of religion or expel them

[28] Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ fī al-Tafsīr*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2000), 459–60.

[29] Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, vol. 10 (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1964), 165–66.

from their homes, toward whom *birr* and *qisṭ* remain applicable. Al-Ṭabarī understands "*birr*" in terms of kindness and benevolent treatment, while "*qisṭ*" refers to acting justly toward them. Importantly, he does not restrict this ruling to a particular non-Muslim community. Rather, he explains that the verse encompasses people of different religions and faiths (*min jamīʿ aṣnāf al-milal wa al-adyān*) who meet the conditions specified in the verse.[30] These verses do not explicitly regulate congratulation, visiting, gift-giving, or other specific forms of social interaction. Rather, it establishes a general normative framework for benevolent and just treatment of peaceful non-Muslims, which EDI subsequently extends to particular forms of interreligious social conduct, including *tahniʾah* (congratulatory greetings). The significant interpretive operation is therefore the reclassification of the relevant Qurʾanic material from general moral discourse into a normative framework for interreligious social relations. These interpretations provide a broader ethical basis from which the fatwa can situate particular forms of social interaction within the Qurʾanic imperative of benevolent and just conduct.[31]

Table 2 delineates an important feature of how EDI connects different Qurʾanic principles into a single argumentative structure. The verses concerning good speech, benevolence, kindness, and fairness do not independently establish the ruling on *tahniʾah*. Their cumulative effect, however, is to construct a Qurʾanic ethical framework within which positive interaction with non-Muslims is presented as normatively intelligible. The argument consequently operates through semantic aggregation: concepts drawn from different Qurʾanic passages are assembled into a coherent normative field, and the contemporary practice is then positioned within that field. The resulting legal argument is therefore not based on a single proof-text but on the convergence of several general ethical principles. This becomes particularly evident that maintaining relations, giving gifts, visiting, and congratulating non-Muslims are all included among the manifestations of benevolence. Such a formulation is analytically important because it converts an abstract Qurʾanic virtue into a classificatory device for contemporary practices.[32] Once *tahniʾah* is classified as a manifestation of benevolence, its legal evaluation is no longer determined primarily by the religious identity of the recipient or by the festival as an isolated category. Instead, the act is assessed according to the ethical quality attributed to the social interaction itself. The Qurʾanic principle consequently functions as a bridge between a general moral injunction and a specific contemporary practice.[33]

The result of this interpretive operation can be observed in the transformation of the initial legal question. The question presented to EDI concerns the permissibility of social courtesies toward non-Muslims, particularly neighbors and colleagues who exchange

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30 Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, vol. 22 (Cairo: Dār Hajr, 2001), 567–72.

31 Mohamad Yusuf Ahmad Hasyim et al., "Islamic Legal Hermeneutics and Scientific Knowledge: Reinterpreting Classical Qur'anic Exegesis in Contemporary Contexts," *Nusantara: Journal of Law Studies* 5, no. 2 (August 2026): 1280–308.

32 Compare with Khairul Falah Shamsul Bahrin and Mustafa Mat Jubri Shamsuddin, "Understanding the Rulings on Greetings and Prayers for Non-Muslims in Selangor: An Analytical Study," *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies* 10, no. 3 (2024): 1–8.

33 Fakhri Afif and Abdul Rouf, "Rethinking Moral Ambiguity in the Qur'an: A Descriptive–Interpretive Meta-Ethical Analysis," *International Journal of Islamic Khazanah* 15, no. 2 (December 2025): 112–34.

greetings on religious occasions. The fatwa responds by embedding that question within a wider Qurʾanic discourse on peaceful coexistence and benevolent treatment. In doing so, it does not derive *tahniʾah* directly from an explicit textual command. Rather, it establishes a chain of normative relevance in which general Qurʾanic ethical principles are extended to a particular form of contemporary interreligious interaction.[34] Therefore, EDI constructs the Qurʾanic basis of its ruling through normative reframing rather than direct textual prescription. This finding is important for understanding the subsequent stages of the fatwa, because once *tahniʾah* has been located within the Qurʾanic normative field of benevolent interreligious conduct, prophetic precedents and classical juristic positions can be mobilized in support of the same classification. The Qurʾanic material therefore establishes the initial normative frame within which the contemporary practice becomes legally intelligible.

Extending Prophetic Precedents to Contemporary Interfaith Relations

Having established a Qurʾanic normative framework, EDI proceeds to substantiate the permissibility of interreligious interaction through Prophetic precedent and classical juristic reasoning. The fatwa begins with the Prophet's acceptance of gifts from non-Muslims and treats this practice as evidence of the permissibility of positive social interaction across religious boundaries. The fatwa specifically invokes reports concerning the Prophet's acceptance of gifts from non-Muslim rulers, including the *muqawqis* (the ruler of the Copts), and a report attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib concerning gifts from *Kisrā* (the title of the Persian ruler), *Qayṣar* (the title of the Roman/Byzantine ruler), and *Mulūk* (other rulers).[35] These precedents are subsequently interpreted by Muslim jurists as demonstrating not merely the permissibility of accepting such gifts but their relationship to benevolence and noble morals (*makārim al-akhlāq*). The significance of this move lies in the distance between the original precedent and the contemporary practice under consideration. EDI nevertheless treats the former as a legally relevant precedent for the latter by identifying a common normative characteristic: both belong to a broader category of positive social interaction that does not, in itself, entail religious identification or theological endorsement.

The fatwa, therefore, does not seek an exact prophetic precedent for *tahniʾah*. Instead, it identifies the normative principle embodied in an existing precedent and extends that principle to a new social practice. The reasoning, therefore, can be characterized as functional analogy rather than literal equivalence. In *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), the extension of a ruling from an original case to a new case depends not on the identity of the acts themselves, but on a relevant common cause (*ʿillah*) that connects them.[36] In this sense, the legal relevance of the Prophetic precedent derives from the normative rationale attributed to the act—particularly benevolence and good moral conduct—rather than from a formal

[34] Abdessamad Belhaj, "Muslim Loyalty and Identity in Europe: Discourse Analysis of ECFR Fatwas," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 49, no. 1 (June 2025): 74–91.

[35] Refer to the "Content" subsection titled "Ḥaththh al-Sharʿ ʿalā al-Iḥsān ilā al-Nās (The Sharia's Encouragement to Show Benevolence Toward People)" within the referenced fatwa Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi-al-Aʿyād wa-al-Munāsabāt.

[36] Muhammed Komath, "Rational Force of Analogy/Qiyās in Law: Logic of Law in Islamic and Contemporary Legal Reasoning," *Informal Logic* 45, no. 3 (September 2025): 423–48.

equivalence between gift-giving and *tahniʾah*. By incorporating this discourse interpretation into the argument, the EDI transforms the Prophetic precedent from an isolated historical report into a general ethical-legal principle. The acceptance of gifts becomes evidence of a broader Islamic recognition of morally positive interaction with non-Muslims. The relevance of the precedent to *tahniʾah* consequently rests on the shared classification of both practices as forms of good social conduct.

Table 3
Extending Prophetic Precedents in EDI's Fatwa on Interfaith Greetings

Prophetic Source	Original Practice	Interpretive Operation	Meaning-Making of *Tahniʾah*
Prophet's acceptance of gifts from non-Muslims	Receiving gifts from non-Muslims	Extracts the underlying ethical principle rather than treating gift-giving as the exact legal precedent	Applies the shared normative principle through functional analogy
Gift from al-*Muqawqis*, ruler of the Copts	Receiving a gift from a non-Muslim ruler	Extends the significance of the precedent from individual interaction to interreligious relations	Establishes that interaction with non-Muslims does not inherently constitute religious affirmation
Report attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib concerning gifts from *Kisrā*, *Qayṣar*, and *Mulūk*	Receiving gifts from non-Muslim rulers	Reinforces the prophetic precedent through companion practice	Supports the legitimacy of positive relations with non-Muslims

Source: Author's elaboration, 2026.

The transition between practices is determined not by their formal identities but by the normative similarities attributed to them.[37] This continuum is particularly important for understanding how the fatwa negotiates the absence of an unequivocal Prophetic precedent concerning contemporary *tahniʾah*. EDI treats the absence as requiring a different mode of legal reasoning: the identification of broader principles embedded in existing precedents and their application to a new practice. The Prophet's acceptance of gifts from non-Muslims is significant not primarily because the act of receiving a gift constitutes the legal issue under contemporary consideration, but because it demonstrates that religious difference does not, in itself, preclude benevolent interpersonal relations. The precedent, therefore, acquires broader normative significance: gift-giving is understood as an expression of benevolence and good moral conduct, rather than as an act whose legal significance depends exclusively on the religious identity of the parties involved.[38] Once that principle is established, other forms of social interaction can be assessed through the same normative framework. EDI also uses a report concerning early Muslim figures who attended non-Muslim festivals or consumed food prepared for such occasions, which further strengthens this argument. It cites an account involving ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib receiving *fālūdhaj* (a traditional sweet dessert)

[37] See: Habib Ahmed, "Islamic Normative Legal Theory: Framework and Applications," *Journal of Law and Religion* 40, no. 1 (January 2025): 28–58.

[38] Compare with Matthew S. Erie, "Sharia, Charity, and *Minjian* Autonomy in Muslim China: Gift Giving in a Plural World," *American Ethnologist* 43, no. 2 (May 2016): 311–24.

associated with Nowruz.[39] The inclusion of these reports is significant because they shift the evidentiary basis from the Prophet's conduct to the conduct of Companions and the broader inherited tradition. EDI thereby constructs a layered precedent structure in which Prophetic practice and Companion practice mutually reinforce the permissibility of forms of social engagement with non-Muslims.

Table 3 illustrates that the EDI reconstructs *tahniʾah* as the most recent point on a continuum of established forms of interreligious interaction. The fatwa thus converts a set of individually distinct precedents into a coherent normative pattern: religious difference does not, by itself, invalidate benevolent social interaction. The EDI extends prophetic precedents to contemporary *tahniʾah* by identifying a common normative structure across otherwise different practices. Rather than requiring a direct textual precedent for every contemporary act, the fatwa extracts broader principles of benevolence, social connection, good character, and non-hostile interaction from inherited sources and applies them to a new social practice. The contemporary ruling is consequently supported not by a single precedent identical to *tahniʾah*, but by a cumulative chain of precedential extension through which gift-giving, hospitality, visiting, social connection, and congratulation are rendered members of the same normative field.

Reconstructing the Classical *Fiqh* through Juristic Plurality

The extension of Prophetic precedent in EDI's fatwa is accompanied by a deliberate engagement with the plurality of the classical juristic tradition. Rather than presenting the inherited *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) as a single, internally uniform position, the fatwa assembles a range of juristic authorities whose statements concern different forms of interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims. These authorities include al-Sarakhsī, al-Burhānburī, al-Mardāwī, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, ʿAlīsh, and al-Ḥaṭṭāb.[40] Their positions do not all address precisely the same legal question, nor do they produce identical rulings. What EDI does, however, is place these dispersed juristic materials into a single argumentative configuration in which the permissibility of *tahniʾah* can be presented as having substantial precedent within the inherited legal tradition. EDI incorporates this position after presenting Prophetic reports concerning the acceptance of gifts from non-Muslims. The juristic citation consequently performs a mediating function: a specific prophetic practice is transformed into a broader juristic principle concerning ethical interaction.

Al-Sarakhsī in *Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabīr* describes giving gifts as part of noble morals and explicitly states that such conduct is good in relation to Muslims and non-Muslims. He said:

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[39] Refer to the "Content" subsection titled "Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi al-Aʿyād wa al-Munāsabāt wa al-Adillah ʿalā Dhālik (The Evidence Regarding the Ruling on Congratulating Non-Muslims on Their Religious Festivals and Occasions)" within the referenced fatwa Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi-al-Aʿyād wa-al-Munāsabāt.

[40] Refer to the "Content" subsection titled "Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi al-Aʿyād wa al-Munāsabāt wa al-Adillah ʿalā Dhālik (The Evidence Regarding the Ruling on Congratulating Non-Muslims on Their Religious Festivals and Occasions)" and subsection titled "Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi Aʿyādihim min Qabīl al-Khuluq al-Ḥasan al-Maʾmūr bihi al-Muslim (Congratulating Non-Muslims on Their Religious Festivals as an Expression of Exemplary Character Encouraged among Muslims)" within the referenced fatwa Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi-al-Aʿyād wa-al-Munāsabāt.

> "*Maintaining kinship ties is regarded as praiseworthy by every rational person* (ʿinda kulli ʿāqil) *and in every religion* (fī kulli dīn)*, and giving gifts to others is among the noble qualities of* makārim al-akhlāq. *The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said, 'I have been sent (as Messenger) to perfect noble morals.' Thus, we know that this is good with respect to Muslims and polytheists alike* (ḥasan fī ḥaqq al-muslimīn wa al-mushrikīn jamīʿan)."[41]

The significance of al-Sarakhsī for the contemporary fatwa therefore lies not simply in the fact that a classical authority permitted a particular action, but in the conceptual category through which he understood that action. Gift-giving is rendered meaningful as moral virtues, and this ethical classification makes it available for extension to other forms of social interaction. A similar strategy appears in the fatwa's use of Niẓāmuddīn al-Burhānburī's *al-Fatāwā al-Hindiyyah*. The work is cited for the permissibility of accepting hospitality from protected non-Muslim subjects (*ahl al-dhimmah*), visiting them, and maintaining relations with non-Muslims. Particularly significant is its formulation that a Muslim may maintain relations with a non-Muslim whether the person is a relative or not and whether he is a combatant or a protected non-Muslim.[42] EDI highlights this formulation to demonstrate that religious difference does not, in itself, eliminate the permissibility of social connection. The citation therefore expands the evidentiary field beyond isolated acts of gift-giving toward a broader juristic recognition of interpersonal relations across religious boundaries.

In *al-Inṣāf*, Al-Mardāwī acknowledges juristic disagreement concerning congratulating, offering condolences to, and visiting non-Muslims. He subsequently identifies the permissibility of visiting non-Muslims as the correct position, grounding it in the Prophetic precedent of visiting a Jewish boy and inviting him to Islam.[43] EDI subsequently draws on this juristic plurality to foreground a permissive strand within the classical tradition and extend its normative logic to contemporary interfaith greetings, thereby transforming inherited juristic disagreement into a resource for contextual legal reasoning. Additionally, ʿAlīsh introduces intention as a decisive criterion in distinguishing social expression from theological affirmation. In *Fatḥ al-ʿAlī al-Mālik*, he holds that a Muslim does not become an apostate by telling a Christian, "May God preserve you and grant you continued life year after year (*aḥyāka Allāh likulli ʿām*)," provided that the speaker does not intend by the statement to venerate unbelief or approve of it.[44] The EDI's fatwa therefore does not derive from the verbal form of the expression alone. Rather, its legal significance depends upon whether the utterance is understood as an act of theological affirmation or as a socially intelligible expression devoid of such intent. This distinction is particularly significant for the reconstruction of *tahniʾah*, because it demonstrates that the same linguistic act may acquire different legal classifications depending on the intention attributed to the speaker and the religious meaning assigned to the utterance.

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41 See: Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī, *Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabīr*, vol. 1 (al-Sharqiyyah, n.d.), 96.

42 See Niẓāmuddīn al-Burhānburī, *Al-Fatāwā al-Hindiyyah*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 347.

43 See: ʿAlī ibn Sulaymān al-Mardāwī, *Al-Inṣāf fī Maʿrifat al-Rājiḥ min al-Khilāf ʿalā Madhhab al-Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 4:234.

44 See: Muḥammad bin Aḥmad ʿAlīsh, *Fatḥ al-ʿAlī al-Mālik fī al-Fatwā ʿalā Madhhab al-Imām Mālik* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, n.d.), 2:349.

Table 4
Juristic Plurality in EDI's Fatwa on Interfaith Greetings

Jurist	Work	Juristic Issue	Interpretive Operation	Meaning-Making of *Tahniʾah*
Al-Sarakhsī	*Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabīr*	Gift-giving to Muslims and non-Muslims	Reclassifies social exchange as an ethical practice rather than a religious act	Provides an ethical basis for extending benevolent interaction to congratulation
Niẓāmuddīn al-Burhānburī	*Al-Fatāwā al-Hindiyyah*	Hospitality, visiting, and maintaining relations with *ahl al-dhimmah*	Establishes religious difference as insufficient, by itself, to prohibit social connection	Broadens the juristic basis for interreligious social interaction
Al-Mardāwī	*Al-Inṣāf*	Congratulating, offering condolences to, and visiting non-Muslims	Foregrounds a permissive strand within the classical tradition	Reduces the distance between classical juristic discourse and contemporary *tahniʾah*
ʿAlīsh	*Fatḥ al-ʿAlī al-Mālik*	Congratulating a Christian with expressions such as "May God preserve you and grant you continued life year after year (*aḥyāka Allāh likulli ʿām*)	Introduces intention as a criterion for determining the legal meaning of an utterance	Allows a distinction between congratulation as social courtesy and theological affirmation
Al-Ḥaṭṭāb	*Mawāhib al-Jalīl fī Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*	Saying "A blessed festival to you (*ʿīd mubārak ʿalayk*) to non-Muslims	Differentiates the external form of speech from its religious significance	Supports the possibility of interpreting *tahniʾah* as ordinary social interaction
Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī	*Al-Fatāwā al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kubrā*	Practices resembling non-Muslim festivals (*al-tashabbuh*)	Establishes a distinction between external resemblance and religious identification	Helps separate interfaith greetings from religious participation or imitation

Source: Authors' elaboration, 2026.

Al-Ḥaṭṭāb, in *Mawāhib al-Jalīl fī Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*, records a juristic position concerning a Muslim who says to a non-Muslim, "A blessed festival to you (*ʿīd mubārak ʿalayk*)." For him, such a greeting entails unbelief only when intended to venerate the non-Muslim religion or its festival.[45] Without such intention, according to EDI, the statement does not constitute unbelief, demonstrating that legal classification depends upon the speaker's intention and the religious meaning attributed to the utterance. At this juncture, intention mediates meaning-making and legal classification. The treatment of Ibn Ḥajar al-

[45] See: Muḥammad bin ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥaṭṭāb, *Mawāhib al-Jalīl fī Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar Khalīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1992), 6:289.

Haytamī further demonstrates this selective engagement with inherited jurisprudence. In *al-Fatāwā al-Fiqhiyyah*, his discussion addresses practices associated with non-Muslim festivals and asks whether a Muslim incurs disbelief or sin by performing actions resembling those of non-Muslims. He differentiates their legal consequences according to the religious significance attributed to the conduct: imitation of symbols of unbelief constitutes unbelief, imitation of festival symbols incurs sin without unbelief, while mere resemblance without an imitative purpose entails no liability.[46] The ruling thus distinguishes outward form from religious meaning in determining legal classification.

These citations are analytically significant because they reveal that the classical tradition contains a distinction between the external form of an act and the meaning attributed to it. EDI incorporates this distinction into its broader argument concerning *tahni'ah*, thereby making intention and religious signification central criteria in distinguishing social interaction from religious participation. What emerges from these citations is therefore not a simple binary between classical prohibition and contemporary permissibility. EDI does not simply accumulate authoritative names to increase the number of proofs. It creates a hierarchy of relevance among inherited positions. Table 4 highlights that general discussions of social relations establish the permissibility of interaction, discussions of gifts and hospitality demonstrate the compatibility of positive relations with religious difference, discussions of visiting and condolence establish more direct precedents, and discussions of congratulation address the contemporary practice more explicitly. Through this ordering, dispersed juristic statements become progressively closer to the legal question under consideration.

The juristic plurality identified in the fatwa also creates an important distinction between authority and applicability. A restrictive juristic opinion can remain historically authoritative without necessarily being considered applicable to every subsequent social circumstance. Conversely, the existence of a permissive juristic opinion does not automatically determine its contemporary application. EDI addresses this problem by bringing juristic positions into relation with the characteristics of the present situation. The inherited position provides an authoritative resource, while its applicability depends upon how the contemporary act and its circumstances are characterized. This distinction prepares the argumentative transition to the next stage of the fatwa, where restrictive positions are explicitly interpreted through their historical and social contexts. At this juncture, EDI reconstructs the classical legal tradition through internal juristic plurality rather than through rejection of inherited *fiqh*. The fatwa selectively foregrounds juristic positions that recognize forms of social interaction with non-Muslims and retrieves from the tradition interpretive distinctions concerning intention, imitation, religious glorification, and ordinary social conduct. The classical tradition consequently functions not as a fixed legal code from which a contemporary answer is mechanically extracted, but as a differentiated field of authoritative positions whose relevance is reconstructed in relation to the question being addressed.[47] This

[46] See: Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Al-Fatāwā al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kubrā*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 234.

[47] Ahmed Gad Makhlouf, "Continuity and Change of Traditional Islamic Law in Modern Times: Tarjīḥ as a Method of Adaptation and Development of Legal Doctrines," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 12, no. 1 (2024): 55–74.

reconstruction provides the necessary basis for the fatwa's subsequent treatment of restrictive positions and their historical contexts.

Historicizing Restriction and Reconfiguring Contemporary Social Relations

The reconstruction of juristic plurality in EDI's fatwa reaches a decisive stage when the institution addresses the classical positions that prohibit or restrict congratulating non-Muslims on their religious festivals. Rather than dismissing these positions as erroneous or irrelevant, the fatwa explicitly attributes them to particular historical and social circumstances (*al-siyāqāt al-tārīkhiyyah wa al-ẓurūf al-ijtimāʿiyyah*).[48] The history of Muslim-Christian relations also included periods of warfare, external invasion, and religiously framed political confrontation, most notably during the Crusades, when Christian crusading forces entered Muslim territories as a militarily and religiously charged external presence.[49] Within such circumstances, expressions of esteem toward another community's religious festivals could be interpreted as more than interpersonal courtesy, particularly where festivals functioned as markers of communal religious identity.[50] Such expressions could be perceived as implying affinity with another religious tradition or weakening the symbolic boundaries through which Muslim religious distinctiveness was maintained. Based on these backgrounds, EDI treats the restrictive positions as historically situated legal responses rather than as context-free rules whose applicability remains unchanged across all circumstances.

The historical argument is consequently not presented as a denial of the jurists' reasoning but as an explanation of its operative context. This historical reading becomes particularly important because EDI explicitly invokes the juristic principle that a change in circumstances can produce a change in fatwa. EDI states that changes in reality necessitate changes in a fatwa based upon that reality and identifies four dimensions of change: time, place, persons, and circumstances (*al-fatwā tataghayyar bi-taghayyur al-ʿawāmil al-arbaʿah: al-ẓamān wa al-makān wa al-ashkhāṣ wa al-aḥwāl*).[51] This formulation provides the methodological bridge between inherited jurisprudence and contemporary application.[52] The issue is not whether classical jurisprudence remains authoritative, but whether the factual and social conditions that informed a particular legal assessment remain operative in the present case.

The fatwa then identifies contemporary citizenship as the decisive contextual transformation. It contrasts earlier configurations of Muslim–non-Muslim relations with

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48 Refer to the "Content" subsection titled "Bayān al-Dawāfiʿ allatī Jaʿalat al-Fuqahāʾ Yaqūlūn bi ʿAdam Jawāz Tahniʾat Ghayr al-Muslimīn (Explaining the Reasons Behind the Jurists' Position on the Impermissibility of Congratulating Non-Muslims)" within the referenced fatwa Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi-al-Aʿyād wa-al-Munāsabāt.

49 See: Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades, Christianity, and Islam* (New York, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 2011); Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Florence: Routledge, 2018).

50 See: Alexandra Cuffel, *Shared Saints and Festivals among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024).

51 Refer to the "Content" subsection titled "Bayān al-Dawāfiʿ allatī Jaʿalat al-Fuqahāʾ Yaqūlūn bi ʿAdam Jawāz Tahniʾat Ghayr al-Muslimīn (Explaining the Reasons Behind the Jurists' Position on the Impermissibility of Congratulating Non-Muslims)" within the referenced fatwa Ḥukm Tahniʾah Ghayr al-Muslimīn bi-al-Aʿyād wa-al-Munāsabāt.

52 Khoirul Amru Harahap et al., "Recontextualizing Islamic Inheritance Law in the Contemporary Era: An *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* Perspective and the Responses of Urban Muslim Communities," *Legitima: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 8, no. 2 (June 2026): 351–75.

Table 5
From Historical Restriction to Interfaith Relations

Analytical Dimension	Classical Context	Interpretive Operation	Contemporary Context
Interreligious relations	Relations often shaped by political sovereignty, military confrontation, and religious rivalry	Situates restrictive juristic positions within their historical conditions	Muslims and non-Muslims increasingly share peaceful social and civic environments
Function of religious festivals	Festivals could be associated with competing religious and political communities	Interprets restrictions as responses to the social meaning attached to festivals in conflict-oriented settings	Religious occasions increasingly function as moments of interpersonal and social interaction
Restrictive juristic positions	Prohibition/restriction emerges within particular historical circumstances	Historicizes rather than rejects restrictive positions	Historical conditions are no longer assumed to remain unchanged
Basis of fatwa change	Legal assessment responds to prevailing circumstances	Invokes the principle that fatwa changes with changes in time, place, persons, and circumstances (*al-ẓamān, al-makān, al-ashkhāṣ, al-aḥwāl*)	Contemporary circumstances differ substantially from earlier configurations
Social identity	"Muslim" and "non-Muslim" may function as opposing collective categories	Reconfigures the relevant legal relationship	Non-Muslims are neighbors, colleagues, friends, and fellow citizens
Citizenship (*muwāṭanah*)	Political belonging structured differently from modern citizenship	Uses citizenship as a new contextual category	Muslims and non-Muslims participate in a shared civic community
Meaning-makig of *tahniʾah*	Potentially understood as identification with or support for another religious community	Reassesses the social meaning of the act	Understood as greeting, friendship, goodwill, and neighborliness

Source: Authors' elaboration, 2026.

what it calls the present age of *muwāṭanah* (citizenship), characterized by intensive social interaction between Muslims and non-Muslims.[53] In this environment, non-Muslims are not presented primarily as external religious adversaries but as neighbors, colleagues, friends, and members of the same social and political community.[54] This shift in social structure changes the practical meaning of congratulation. What might previously have been interpreted as an

[53] See: Nabīl Dhamuil, *Al-Muwāṭanah al-Tahaddiyāt wa al-Ṭumūhat fī al-Dawlah al-Hadīthah* (Cairo: Maktabah Akadimiyah, 2008); Edy Saputra et al., "Darul Ahdi Wa Syahadah and the Implementation of Maqasid Al-Shariah in the Context of the Pancasila State," *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syari'ah dan Masyarakat* 24, no. 2 (November 2024): 460–75.

[54] Refer to Rāshid al-Ghannūshī, *Ḥuqūq al-Muwāṭanah: Ḥuqūq Ghayr al-Muslim fī al-Mujtamaʿ al-Islāmī* (London: IIIT, 1993); Andrew F. March, *Islam and Liberal Citizenship: The Search for an Overlapping Consensus* (New York Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

act of solidarity with a competing religious community can, under contemporary conditions, function as an ordinary form of greeting, neighborliness, and social courtesy. The concept of citizenship therefore performs more than a descriptive function in the fatwa. It becomes a contextual category for legal differentiation. By invoking contemporary citizenship, EDI changes the relevant unit of analysis from the abstract opposition between "Muslim" and "non-Muslim" to the concrete relationship between individuals who share a social environment.[55] The question is no longer simply whether one person is Muslim and the other is non-Muslim. It becomes whether the interaction takes place within conditions of peaceful coexistence, reciprocal social relations, and shared civic life.[56] This contextual reconfiguration makes forms of social courtesy legally distinguishable from acts of religious allegiance.

Table 5 is especially evident in the transformation of the meaning of *tahniʾah*. In a conflict-oriented environment, congratulation could be interpreted as an expression of religious or political solidarity with an opposing community. However, in a contemporary citizenship-based environment, the same act can be interpreted as an expression of courtesy, friendship, neighborliness, or reciprocal social recognition.[57] The fatwa therefore does not merely apply an old rule to a new context; it argues that the context changes the meaning of the act to which the rule is being applied. The fatwa makes this distinction particularly explicit when it describes contemporary congratulation as resembling ordinary greetings, peace, and good neighborliness. In the present social environment, exchanging congratulations and sharing in another person's happiness are understood by ordinary people as forms of social interaction rather than as theological endorsement.[58] The semantic value of the act therefore changes with its social context.[59] The same external expression may carry a different normative significance depending upon the structure of the relationship in which it occurs. This contextual differentiation also allows EDI to distinguish between religious conviction and interpersonal conduct. The fatwa emphasizes that a Muslim can reject disbelief at the level of theological conviction without consequently being required to hate or socially alienate people who hold different beliefs. It therefore separates opposition to a religious

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55 Compare with Abdulhaq Hamīsh, *Fiqh al-Muwāṭanah fī Uṣūl al-Sharīʿah wa Maqāṣidihā* (Jijel: Aurāq Thaqāfiyah, 2017).

56 Fathurrosyid et al., "From Theological Loyalty to Humanistic Integrity: A Maqāṣidī Reconstruction of the Qur'anic Verses on Al-Walā' wa Al-Barā'," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 27, no. 2 (August 2026): 562–87; Mukhammad Hubbab Nauval, "Examining Hermeneutical Complexity in Al-Ṭabarī's Literal Hermeneutics: Rethinking the *Maʾthūr–Raʾy* Dichotomy," *Basmala: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith* 1, no. 2 (December 2025): 182–201; Ahmad Hermawan and Jesus Alberto Valero Matas, "Religious Moderation in Shaping Interfaith Relations: A Comparative Study of Indonesia and Malaysia," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama dan Lintas Budaya* 8, no. 2 (August 2024): 95–110.

57 See: Ihsan Yilmaz and Denitsa Pirinova Sokolova-Shipoli, *Muslim Legal Pluralism in the West: Transnationalism, Political Participation, Citizenship and Shari'a* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024); Aulia Rahman et al., "Global Citizenship Concepts Perspective Abdullah Ahmed An Naim," *International Journal of Islamic Khazanah* 14, no. 1 (February 2024): 64–72.

58 See: Robert Setio, *Muslim Christian Relations Observed: Comparative Studies from Indonesia and the Netherlands*, 1st ed, ed. Volker Küster, Contact Zone 22 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019); Shilva Lioni and Tri Pujiati, "Investigating Politeness Strategies Among Native Indonesian Speakers During Presidential Candidate Debate: A Cyberpragmatic Study," *Journal of Digital Sociohumanities* 2, no. 2 (2025): 128–41.

59 Compare with Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights, and International Law* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005). This work is an ambitious attempt to modernize Islamic law, calling for reform of the historical formulations of Islamic law, commonly known as Sharia that is perceived by many Muslims to be part of the Islamic faith.

doctrine from hostility toward its adherents. In this context, the ethical obligation to treat human beings with kindness and benevolence does not require theological agreement with them.[60] This distinction is crucial because it removes the assumption that a positive social gesture necessarily communicates religious approval.

Tafsīr and Meaning-Making as Analytical Bridges in Fatwa Production

The findings suggest that contemporary fatwa production cannot be adequately explained as the retrieval of pre-existing rules from authoritative texts. In the EDI's fatwa case, legal judgment emerges through a layered process in which textual materials are interpreted, connected, prioritized, and related to a changing social reality. This finding challenges a binary conception of Islamic legal reasoning that contrasts textual fidelity with contextual flexibility, as though the two represented mutually exclusive approaches.[61] The EDI's reasoning demonstrates that contextualization operates from within the textual tradition itself.[62] Qur'anic ethical principles establish normative orientations, Prophetic reports provide precedential possibilities, classical jurists supply differentiated interpretive resources, and contemporary circumstances determine which meanings become legally salient. The resulting fatwa is therefore neither a simple reproduction of inherited doctrine nor an autonomous response to modern social values. It is produced through the interaction of authoritative textual inheritance and contextual interpretation. This interaction is particularly important because the legal question concerns an act whose normative significance is not self-evident. The permissibility of *tahni'ah* depends upon how the act is interpreted before it can be legally classified.

The findings also illuminate the significance of juristic plurality for contemporary Islamic authority. Rather than treating the classical tradition as a closed repository of determinate answers, EDI approaches it as a differentiated field containing competing positions, conceptual distinctions, and varying degrees of relevance. This does not imply arbitrary selection. The institution's reasoning is structured by recognizable criteria, including intention, religious signification, social function, and historical circumstance. Consequently, the classical *fiqh* tradition functions less as a repository of fixed rules than as an argumentative repertoire from which contemporary legal reasoning can draw, select, and reconfigure alternative juristic possibilities.[63] This observation is important for understanding how institutional fatwa authorities negotiate continuity and change. Their legitimacy does not necessarily depend upon reproducing the most restrictive historical position; it may instead

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60 Zuly Qodir and Bilveer Singh, "Tension of Muslim-Christian Relations in Indonesia: The Case of Conversion and Celebrating Christmas," *Al-Albab* 10, no. 2 (December 2021): 295–309.

61 Anwar Mujahidin, Muhammad Shohibul Itmam, and Ahmad Choirul Rofiq, "The Dynamic of Contextualization in Indonesian Qur'anic Tafsirs: A Comparative Study of Tafsir Al-Azhar and Tafsir Al-Mishbāh on the Story of the Prophet Moses," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 25, no. 2 (August 2024): 221–46.

62 Alam Tarlam et al., "Sundanese Tafsīr as Lived Religion: Vernacular Exegesis and Multicultural Islamic Education in Urban Indonesia," *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama dan Lintas Budaya* 9, no. 3 (December 2025): 273–90.

63 Samuel D. Blanch, "Thinking about Islamic Legal Traditions in Multicultural Contexts," *Griffith Law Review* 32, no. 2 (April 2023): 215–35; Omar Farahat, "Generality and Exception in Islamic Legal Theory: Intent, Language, and the Jurist's Role," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 72, no. 2 (2024): 292–323.

depend upon demonstrating that a contemporary ruling remains anchored within the authorized plurality of the tradition. The strategic use of specific juristic positions constitutes an authoritative interpretation. However, a permissive precedent alone is insufficient; the institution must demonstrate its relevance to the current issue.[64]

More fundamentally, the EDI's fatwa case supports understanding contemporary fatwa as a hermeneutic-juridical practice in which inherited textual authority is transformed into contextual normativity through the reconstruction of meaning. Hermeneutical activity here should not be reduced to subjective interpretation or to the importation of external philosophical theories into Islamic law. Rather, it refers to the structured process through which texts, precedents, concepts, intentions, historical circumstances, and contemporary social realities are brought into an interpretive relationship.[65] The fatwa's treatment of *tahni'ah* exemplifies this process: a practice initially associated with another religion's festival is reinterpreted through Qur'anic ethics, juristic distinctions, intention, and citizenship until its primary contemporary meaning becomes social courtesy. The legal norm is consequently not detached from textual authority; it is produced through the contextual rearticulating of that authority. This perspective also explains why the distinction between "text" and "context" is analytically insufficient.[66] Context does not simply provide background information for applying a fixed rule. It helps determine the meaning and legal identity of the practice to which the rule is applied.[67] Fatwa, therefore, involves interpretation as constitutive legal reasoning.

In this respect, the permissive ruling should not be interpreted as a generalized claim that all forms of participation in non-Muslim religious festivals are permissible. EDI maintains a distinction between congratulating, participating in religious ritual, and affirming religious doctrine. These practices may occur within the same temporal and social setting, but they do not necessarily possess the same normative meaning. The fatwa's legal reasoning depends precisely upon this differentiation. By separating these categories, it is able to permit one form of conduct without treating the others as equally permissible. The transformation of *tahni'ah* can be represented as a movement across three interconnected levels of meaning. At the first level, the practice is identified through its association with a non-Muslim religious festival. At the second, that association is qualified through intention, context, and the distinction between ritual and ordinary social conduct. At the third, the practice is positively

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64 Compare with Lena Larsen, "Islamic Jurisprudence and Transnational Flows: Exploring the European Council for Fatwa and Research," in *From Transnational Relations to Transnational Laws* (London: Routledge, 2016), 139–63; Shaheen Whyte, "Are Fatwas Dispensable? Examining the Contemporary Relevance and Authority of Fatwas in Australia," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 11, nos. 2–3 (July 2023): 314–42; Mahmud El-Wereny, "Religious Authority in the Digital Age: Exploring the Reception of Fatwas and Muftis among Muslims in Germany," *ARGOS*, May 5, 2026, 123–47.

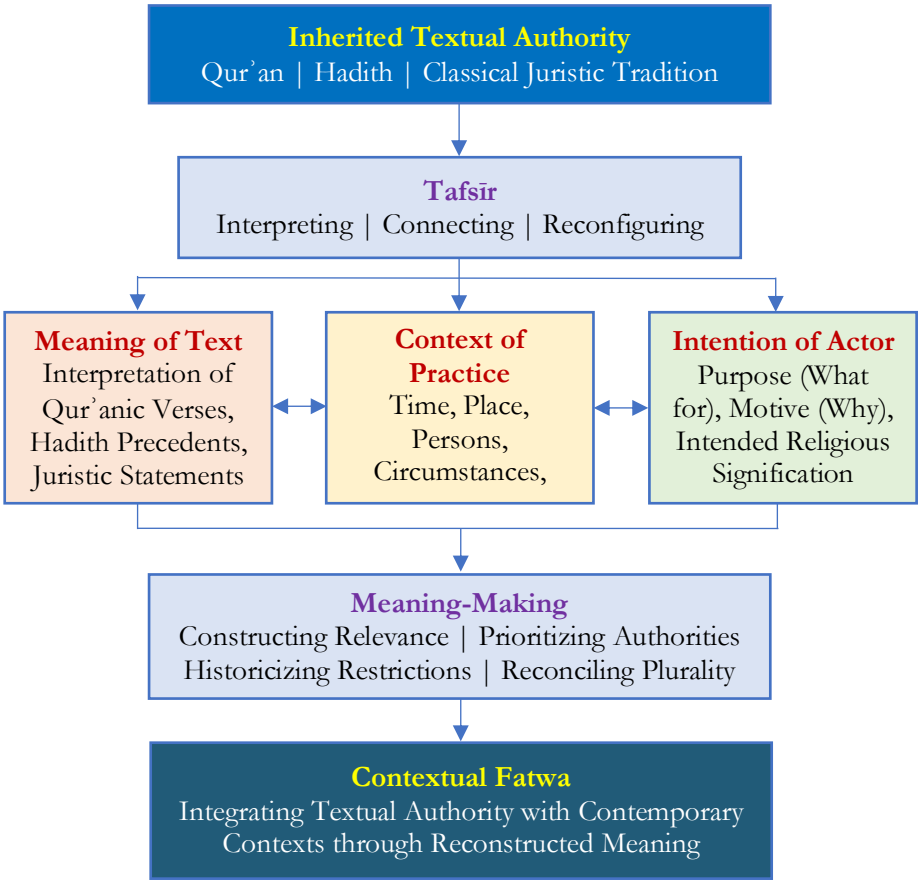
65 Compare with Farahat, "Generality and Exception in Islamic Legal Theory"; Robert Gleave, *Islam and Literalism: Literal Meaning and Interpretation in Islamic Legal Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012); David R. Vishanoff, *The Formation of Islamic Hermeneutics: How Sunni Legal Theorists Imagined a Revealed Law* (New Haven, Conn: American Oriental Society, 2011).

66 See: Emanuel A. Schegloff, "Whose Text? Whose Context?," *Discourse & Society* 8, no. 2 (April 1997): 165–87; Jan Ifversen, "Text, Discourse, Concept: Approaches to Textual Analysis," *Kontur*, no. 7 (2023): 60–69.

67 Explore the function of context through Jan Blommaert, "Context Is/as Critique," *Critique of Anthropology* 21, no. 1 (March 2001): 13–32; Ruth Wodak, "Complex Texts: Analysing, Understanding, Explaining and Interpreting Meanings," *Discourse Studies* 13, no. 5 (October 2011): 623–33.

reconstructed as an expression of courtesy, goodwill, and peaceful coexistence. The legal ruling emerges at the end of this interpretive sequence rather than at its beginning.

Figure 1
The Hermeneutic-Juridical Process of Contemporary Fatwa Production



Source: Authors' elaboration, 2026.

Figure 1 illustrates that contextual fatwa is not produced by applying inherited rules to contemporary facts; it is produced by interpreting inherited authority and reconstructing the meaning of contemporary facts until a legally intelligible relationship between norm and practice is established. This argument has broader implications for the study of contemporary Islamic legal institutions.[68] The EDI's fatwa case indicates that institutional fatwas should be analyzed not only according to their final rulings but also according to the interpretive architecture through which those rulings become persuasive. Such architecture includes the selection and sequencing of textual evidence, the reconstruction of juristic plurality, the historicizing of restrictive positions, the characterization of contemporary social conditions, and the semantic classification of the act under consideration. Examining these operations makes visible a dimension of Islamic legal authority that is obscured when fatwas are treated

[68] Compare with Alexandre Caeiro, "The Making of the Fatwa: The Production of Islamic Legal Expertise in Europe," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 155, no. 3 (December 2011): 81–100; Omer Awass, "Fatwa: The Evolution of an Islamic Legal Practice and Its Influence on Muslim Society" (Dissertation, The Temple University Graduate Board, 2014); Zulfiqar Ali Shah, *Ifta' and Fatwa in the Muslim World and the West* (London: IIIT, 2014).

merely as answers to isolated questions. The EDI's fatwa case demonstrates that continuity is achieved not by freezing inherited meanings but by reconstructing their relevance within new circumstances. Meaning-making precedes, mediates, and ultimately conditions contextual legal frameworks. Therefore, fatwa production is partly a process of constructing the relationship between a normative tradition and a socially situated practice.[69]

The case further demonstrates that interpretation in fatwa production operates not only at the level of textual meaning but also at the level of legal object construction. EDI does not merely interpret what Qurʾanic verses, Prophetic precedents, or juristic statements say; it determines what contemporary *tahniʾah* is as a legally relevant practice. This involves distinguishing congratulation from ritual participation, social courtesy from theological affirmation, and interpersonal recognition from religious endorsement.[70] Such distinctions are not external additions to the legal reasoning. They constitute the conceptual conditions through which the act becomes classifiable as permissible or impermissible. This finding complicates conventional accounts of *ijtihād* (independent legal reasoning) that foreground the derivation of rulings from textual evidence by highlighting the prior task of characterizing the social act to which the ruling is applied. The EDI's fatwa case indicates that contemporary legal reasoning requires a reciprocal movement between norm and fact: inherited norms help characterize the act, while the interpreted characteristics of the act determine which meanings become applicable. Consequently, contextual fatwa production can be understood as an interpretive form of legal mediation in which textual authority, historical consciousness, and social reality converge to generate contextually intelligible normativity.

Conclusion

This study has examined how *tafsīr* and meaning-making operate in the production of contemporary fatwa by analyzing EDI's ruling on interfaith greetings between Muslims and non-Muslims. The study addresses a central problem in contemporary Islamic legal reasoning: how authoritative textual sources, including the Qurʾan, Prophetic traditions, and classical juristic literature, are mobilized to formulate legally relevant responses to changing forms of interreligious interaction. The findings demonstrate that EDI does not merely retrieve an established ruling from inherited sources. Rather, it employs interpretive operations that connect Qurʾanic ethical principles, Prophetic precedents, juristic plurality, historical circumstances, and contemporary citizenship to reconstruct the normative meaning of *tahniʾah*. Through this process, interfaith greetings are differentiated from religious participation and theological affirmation and are reconstructed primarily as social courtesy, goodwill, and peaceful coexistence. The study therefore argues that *tafsīr* constitutes an integral dimension of contemporary fatwa production: interpretation actively mediates

[69] Omer Awass, "Fatwa, Discursivity, and the Production of Sharia," in *Sharia Dynamics*, ed. Timothy P. Daniels (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 31–61; Dewi Masyithoh, "Teaching Digital Literature in Secondary School: Multimodal Meaning-Making and Students' Interpretive Engagement," *Lingua Technica: Journal of Digital Literary Studies* 1, no. 1 (2025): 67–79.

[70] Compare with the Final Statement of "The Sixth Ordinary Session of the European Council for Fatwa and Research," European Council for Fatwa and Research, Dublin, September 1, 2000.

between textual authority and social reality, while meaning-making determines how a contemporary practice becomes legally intelligible and normatively classifiable.

Theoretically, this finding contributes to the study of contemporary Islamic legal authority by positioning *tafsīr* and meaning-making as constitutive mechanisms of fatwa production rather than as secondary activities accompanying the derivation of legal rulings. The EDI's fatwa case demonstrates that textual authority does not operate independently of interpretation, nor does context simply modify a predetermined rule. Instead, text, tradition, context, intention, and social meaning interact in producing contextual normativity. This perspective challenges binary approaches that oppose textual fidelity to contextual adaptation and instead conceptualizes continuity as an interpretive achievement. Practically, the findings suggest that contemporary fatwa institutions require interpretive frameworks capable of maintaining fidelity to inherited Islamic sources while adequately accounting for transformations in citizenship, interfaith relations, and everyday social interaction. For Islamic legal practitioners, the case demonstrates the importance of distinguishing religious affirmation from interpersonal recognition and ritual participation from social courtesy. More broadly, the study suggests that responsible contemporary fatwa production requires not only identifying authoritative evidence but also critically interpreting the social meaning of the practices to which that evidence is applied.

This study is nevertheless limited by its concentration on a single institutional case and a specific issue of interfaith greetings. Although EDI provides a particularly valuable site for examining contemporary Islamic legal interpretation, its reasoning cannot automatically be generalized to all fatwa institutions or Muslim contexts. The study also focuses primarily on the textual and argumentative construction of the fatwa and does not empirically investigate how its ruling is received, negotiated, or practiced by Muslims and non-Muslims in different social settings. Future research should therefore compare multiple fatwa institutions across Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts to determine whether similar forms of *tafsīr*, juristic reconstruction, contextualization, and meaning-making operate elsewhere. Further studies could also examine the institutional processes through which contemporary realities enter fatwa deliberation, as well as audience reception and the everyday implementation of such rulings. Comparative and reception-oriented research would allow the analytical model proposed here to move beyond the EDI case and contribute to a broader understanding of how Islamic legal authority continuously transforms inherited textual resources into contextually meaningful normative guidance.

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