

Islamic Universalism: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's Salafī Deliberations on the Duration of Hell-Fire

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Classical Sunnī eschatology maintains that all those who believe that God is one will enter the Garden of Paradise in due time. Some monotheists may first have to endure punishment and purification in the Fire for their sins, but those with even the least grain of belief will eventually enter the Garden as their reward. Conversely, unbelievers and those who associate partners with God (*mushrikūn*) will spend eternity in Hell-Fire as retribution for their unforgivable error.¹ Classical Sunnism supports punishment of unbelievers and associators in unending Fire with many verses from the Qurʾān. However, its fundamental warrant for this doctrine is not the Qurʾān but consensus (*ijmāʿ*). The classical Sunnī principle of consensus affirms that when the scholars of the Muslim community have agreed on a matter — that Islam has Five Pillars, for example — it is no longer open to discussion.² So, the claim here is that the Muslim community has reached a binding consensus that punishment of unbelievers in the Fire will never cease.³

This claim has not gone uncontested. In copious writings on the duration of the Fire, the Damascene theologian Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) — the leading student of the famed Ḥanbalī jurist Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) — presents what may well be the most forthright challenge to the alleged consensus on this doctrine in medieval Islamic thought. The case for the limited duration of chastisement in the Fire did receive careful consideration earlier on as is evident in the vast Qurʾān commentary of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209).⁴ Nonetheless, Ibn al-Qayyim's discussions appear to be

unprecedented in their thoroughness and length. In his argumentation, the Fire no longer functions retributively to punish as in the classical doctrine but therapeutically to cleanse from sins, even the sins of unbelief (*kufīr*) and associationism (*shirk*). Does then the punishment of unbelievers come to an end? Does the Fire pass away when its purposes have been attained? As we will see, some scholars have concluded that Ibn al-Qayyim answers these questions affirmatively to yield a doctrine of universal salvation. Yet, closer examination of his texts shows that coming to this conclusion is not as simple as it first appears.

This article investigates three lengthy discussions on the duration of punishment and the Fire by Ibn al-Qayyim that come from the later years of his life. These three have emerged in recent controversial literature as the fullest and most significant of Ibn al-Qayyim's deliberations on the topic.⁵ I have not undertaken an exhaustive search for additional treatments elsewhere in Ibn al-Qayyim's vast corpus, and no attempt is made here to provide a comprehensive overview of his thought on this subject. Rather, this study seeks to clarify Ibn al-Qayyim's views in the key texts under consideration, note debts to his teacher Ibn Taymiyya, and explore the means by which he circumvents the classical Sunnī consensus.

The Beginnings of Ibn al-Qayyim's Deliberations

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya reveals how he first broached the question of everlasting chastisement with Ibn Taymiyya in an autobiographical note found in his *Shifā' al-ʿalīl* (**Healing of the Sick**) [hereafter *Shifā'*]:⁶

I had asked Shaykh al-Islam [Ibn Taymiyya] — God sanctify his spirit — [about everlasting chastisement]. He said to me, “This issue is very great”, and he gave no reply concerning it. Some time had passed after that when I saw in the commentary of ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd [or Ḥūmayd] al-Kiththī one of those traditions I have mentioned. So, I sent the book to [Ibn Taymiyya] while he was in his last session (*fī majlisihī al-akbīr*). I marked that place [in the book], and I told the messenger, “Say to him, ‘This place is difficult for him, and he does not know what it is.’” Then, he wrote his famous work about it — the mercy of God be upon him. Whoever has the grace of knowledge, let him bring it forth, and above each one having knowledge is one who is All-Knowing (pp. 564–65).

It appears that Ibn Taymiyya was not sure how to respond to Ibn al-Qayyim's first inquiry on the duration of the Fire. He only answered that the question was “very great.” Ibn al-Qayyim's second inquiry was prompted by reading the commentary of ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd al-Kissī (or al-Kiththī as he writes), a ninth-century Hadith scholar from Kiss near Samarqand (d. 249/863).⁷ A tradition related by ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd puzzled Ibn al-Qayyim. So, he marked

the spot in the book and sent it to his teacher via messenger. This occurred “while [Ibn Taymiyya] was in his last session,” presumably near the end of his life. In reply Ibn Taymiyya composed what Ibn al-Qayyim calls his “famous work.” The identity of this work and its date will be clarified below.

In the passage above Ibn al-Qayyim also alludes to having mentioned the puzzling tradition from ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd earlier in *Shifā’*. A few pages back, he does indeed cite from ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd the following report from ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, a Companion of the Prophet and the second Sunnī caliph: “Even if the People of the Fire stayed in the Fire like the amount of sand of ‘Ālij, they would have, despite that, a day in which they would come out” (p. 554). The place name ‘Ālij refers to a large tract of sand in the desert on the way to Mecca,⁸ and the simile “like the amount of sand of ‘Ālij” in ‘Umar’s report indicates a very great length of time. Thus, the sense is that those in the Fire will leave it someday even if they remain therein for a very long time.

At the same place in *Shifā’*, Ibn al-Qayyim cites other reports that also cast doubt on the eternity of punishment in Hell-Fire. Two examples will suffice. A report from the Prophet’s Companion Abū Hurayra conveys a message similar to that of ‘Umar: “There will come to Hell a day when no one will remain in it.” The second example counsels withholding judgment about where humans will end up. The Companion Ibn ‘Abbās is reported to have said, “It is not necessary for anyone to judge God with respect to His creatures or to assign them to a garden or a fire” (p. 554). Ibn al-Qayyim clearly understands these sundry reports to undermine the classical Sunnī consensus that unbelievers and associators will spend eternity in the Fire. But where exactly does that lead him?

Ibn al-Qayyim’s Debt to Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fanā’ al-nār*

Ibn al-Qayyim’s most frequently cited treatment of the Fire’s duration appears in his book on eschatology *Ḥādī al-arwāḥ ilā bilād al-afrah* (Spurring Souls on to the Realms of Joys) [hereafter *Ḥādī*].⁹ A marking on one manuscript of *Ḥādī* dates it to 745/1344–45 with the text, “He [i.e., Ibn al-Qayyim] completed its composition in the year 745 A.H.”¹⁰ I have no reason to doubt this date, but it would be good to have corroborating evidence before accepting it as established. Some 400 years later, the Yemeni scholar Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Ṣan‘ānī (d. 1182/1768) quotes *Ḥādī* at length in his refutation *Raf‘ al-astār* and charges both Ibn al-Qayyim and Ibn Taymiyya with maintaining that Hell-Fire will pass away (*fanā’ al-nār*).¹¹ Despite al-Ṣan‘ānī’s assertions, it has not been obvious what can be rightly learned about Ibn Taymiyya from the discussion in *Ḥādī*. At a few points toward the beginning, Ibn al-Qayyim does indicate that he is quoting Ibn Taymiyya. Unfortunately, however, he does not demarcate Ibn Taymiyya’s words from his

own, indicate the text that he is citing, or make clear which view his teacher took. To make matters more difficult, modern scholars have been hard pressed to find Ibn Taymiyya speaking about the duration of the Fire anywhere in his own texts. On this basis, Saudi scholar ‘Alī al-Ḥarbī even concluded in 1990 that Ibn Taymiyya never said that the Fire will pass away.¹²

Nevertheless, Binyamin Abrahamov came to the opposite conclusion in a 2002 article entitled “The Creation and Duration of Paradise and Hell in Islamic Theology.” Abrahamov argues that both Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya maintain that the Fire will pass away. With respect to Ibn al-Qayyim, Abrahamov draws this inference from *Ḥādī*, but for Ibn Taymiyya he does not refer to any of his writings or mention how hard it has been to find him speaking to this issue. Abrahamov’s sole source for Ibn Taymiyya is al-Ṣan‘ānī.¹³

Fortunately, the key to solving the mystery of Ibn al-Qayyim’s quotations from Ibn Taymiyya and the latter’s own view is now available. In 1995 Muḥammad al-Simharī edited and published a treatise by Ibn Taymiyya and gave it the title *Al-Radd ‘alā man qāla bi-fanā’ al-janna wa al-nār* (**Response to Whoever Says that the Garden and the Fire Will Pass Away**). I will call it *Fanā’ al-nār* for short. As the editor al-Simharī argues, this brief work is undoubtedly authentic.¹⁴ This is the text that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya quotes in *Ḥādī*, and it conspicuously shapes the structure of his discussion in that book. As will become clear below, Ibn al-Qayyim proceeds through the same topics and arguments in the same order as Ibn Taymiyya but with extensive elaboration and addition. Ibn Taymiyya’s text structures Ibn al-Qayyim’s discussion in *Shifā’* as well, but to a lesser degree.

Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fanā’ al-nār* gains added significance in view of Ibn al-Qayyim’s autobiographical note in *Shifā’* quoted above. There, Ibn al-Qayyim comments that he sent his question about ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd’s book to Ibn Taymiyya during “his last session” and that his teacher responded with “his famous work.” There is little reason to doubt that this “famous work” is *Fanā’ al-nār*. Ibn Taymiyya’s text gives careful attention to ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd’s commentary and the report from ‘Umar that troubled Ibn al-Qayyim. Moreover, mention of Ibn Taymiyya being in his “last session” strongly suggests that he was near life’s end. This is corroborated by references which Caterina Bori has identified showing *Fanā’ al-nār* to be the last treatise that Ibn Taymiyya authored.¹⁵ In a long list of Ibn Taymiyya’s works, his disciple Ibn Rushayyiq (d. 749/1348–49) observes, “In his final imprisonment, he produced *Qā’ida fī radd ‘alā man qāla bi-fanā’ al-janna wa al-nār*, in about 20 sheets.”¹⁶ Adding more information, the biographer al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) states concerning Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fī baqā’ al-janna wa al-nār wa fanā’ihimā*, “This is the last thing that he compiled in the citadel, and al-‘Allāma Qādī al-Qudāh Taqī al-Dīn

al-Subkī has refuted it.”¹⁷ Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī did in fact write a refutation of Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fanā’ al-nār* in 1348, and this will be discussed below. More to the point, it is evident that al-Şafadī’s and Ibn Rushayyiq’s notices refer to the same treatise, namely *Fanā’ al-nār*, and that this was the last work that Ibn Taymiyya wrote during his final imprisonment in the citadel of Damascus. This incarceration began in 726/1326. Ibn Taymiyya’s pen and paper were confiscated in Jumādā al-ākhira 728/April–May 1328,¹⁸ and he died in prison later the same year.

From these observations we may conclude that Ibn Taymiyya wrote his last work *Fanā’ al-nār* in response to an inquiry from Ibn al-Qayyim about the duration of punishment and the Fire. This occurred during Ibn Taymiyya’s final imprisonment, just before he was deprived of his writing materials in the spring of 728/1328. Ibn al-Qayyim then followed his teacher’s treatise very closely several years later, perhaps in 745/1344–45, when composing his discussion of the Fire’s duration in *Ḥādī* and more loosely when writing on the same topic in *Şifā’*.

Salafī and Theological Arguments in *Fanā’ al-nār* and *Ḥādī*

Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fanā’ al-nār* (p. 41) and Ibn al-Qayyim’s corresponding discussion in *Ḥādī* (p. 307) both begin by outlining three possible views on the durations of the Garden and the Fire: 1) both pass away, 2) both remain forever, or 3) the Garden remains forever while the Fire passes away. The first of these views is refuted in the first section of *Fanā’ al-nār*. The second view is refuted in the third section. The third view is defended in both the second and fourth sections. The discussion in Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Ḥādī* follows suit. The fifth and final section in Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fanā’ al-nār* cites Qur’ānic verses showing that the Garden will remain forever (pp. 83–87). Ibn al-Qayyim does not go on to treat this matter because he has already attended to it earlier in *Ḥādī* (pp. 305–7) just before picking up with *Fanā’ al-nār*.

The first section of *Fanā’ al-nār* (pp. 42–52) and the parallel discussion in *Ḥādī* (pp. 307–11) are devoted to refuting the views of Jahm b. Şafwān (d. 128/745) and the early Mu’tazilī theologian Abū al-Hudhayl al-‘Allāh (227/841?). Jahm argues that the impossibility of an infinite series means that both the Garden and the Fire must eventually cease to exist. On a similar basis, Abū al-Hudhayl argues not that the two will pass away entirely but that motion in them must end. Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim respond that an infinite series into the future is possible and that Jahm ignores Qur’ānic texts indicating the perpetuity of the Garden. These verses include, “Its food is perpetual” (Q. 13:35), and, “Truly, this is Our provision which is never exhausted” (Q. 38:54).

The second section of *Fanāʾ al-nār* explores textual support for the Fire passing away or at least that no one will suffer chastisement in it forever (pp. 52–70). Ibn al-Qayyim’s matching section in *Hādī* (pp. 311–18) quotes much of Ibn Taymiyya’s content and elaborates similar points. Ibn Taymiyya begins with ‘Umar’s report cited by ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd, “Even if the People of the Fire stayed in the Fire like the amount of sand of ‘Ālij, they would have, despite that, a day in which they would come out.” ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd cites this report, explains Ibn Taymiyya, when interpreting the Qurʾānic testimony that the residents of Hell will be “staying in it for long stretches of time (*lābithīna fihā aḥqāban*)” (Q. 78:23) to show that “long stretches of time” does indeed have an end. Ibn Taymiyya also quotes several early exegetical traditions that take “long stretches of time (*aḥqāb*)” to mean a period of finite length. To reconcile this with classical Sunnī doctrine, it might be argued that the verse applies only to monotheistic sinners and the time they spend in the Fire before entering the Garden.¹⁹ Ibn Taymiyya asserts that this is not so. The verse definitely refers to unbelievers.

Among other points that Ibn Taymiyya makes in this section is that several commentators use Ibn ‘Abbās’s report, “It is not necessary for anyone to judge God with respect to His creatures or to assign them to a garden or a fire,” to explicate the Qurʾānic claim that the residents of the Fire will be “abiding in the Fire, as long as the Heavens and the Earth endure, except as your Lord wills” (Q. 11:107). Time spent in the Fire is not everlasting absolutely. Rather, Ibn Taymiyya observes, it is contingent upon both the existence of this world and — as corroborated by Ibn ‘Abbās — God’s will.

The third section of Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fanāʾ al-nār* (pp. 71–79) and the roughly equivalent section in Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Hādī* (pp. 318–22) list and refute arguments for the perpetuity (*dawām*) of the Fire. Only the first two of these need occupy us here, and the second will be treated first because it is quickly explained. This is the argument that the Qurʾān supports the perpetuity of the Fire. In reply, Ibn Taymiyya recognizes that the Qurʾān says that unbelievers are “abiding in [the Fire] forever (*khālidūn fihā abadan*)” (Q. 4:169, 33:65, etc.). Yet, he avers, the Qurʾān never states that the Fire will not pass away. There would seem to be a contradiction here. If unbelievers abide in the Fire forever, how could the Fire pass away? Ibn Taymiyya responds that the residents of Hell will abide in the abode of chastisement only as long as that chastisement lasts. The terms “abiding” (*khālid*) and “forever” (*abad*) should not be understood in absolute and unqualified senses. This is the same solution to textual difficulties that Ibn Taymiyya employed in the preceding section of *Fanāʾ al-nār*.

The first and more significant argument for the perpetuity of the Fire is that it is held by consensus (*ijmāʿ*), with no conflict over it found among

the Salaf (i.e., the early Muslims). Ibn Taymiyya responds that no consensus on this question is known. No one among the Prophet's Companions said that the Fire would never pass away, and the Successors (*tābi'ūn*), the second generation after the Prophet, held diverse views on the matter. Thus, Ibn Taymiyya argues, there is no *ijmā'* or consensus that the Fire will remain forever.

This way of conceiving consensus divides Ibn Taymiyya methodologically from the mainstream Sunnī scholars of his day, and it is the key to his and Ibn al-Qayyim's Salafī hermeneutic. For Ibn Taymiyya, the only binding consensus is an explicit consensus of the Salaf, the first three generations at most. Thereafter, consensus becomes too difficult to verify. Any consensus by a later generation of scholars is always subject to correction upon discovery of a stronger proof.²⁰ Thus, when Ibn Taymiyya discovers that there was no agreement among the Salaf on the duration of the Fire, he is willing to rethink the issue. In classical Sunnism, however, matters on which consensus have been reached are no longer open to discussion. So, by virtue of raising this question anew, Ibn Taymiyya is breaking the rules of classical Sunnī hermeneutics.

This becomes clearer in Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī's (d. 756/1355) *Al-ftibār*, a refutation of *Fanā' al-nār* written in 1348, twenty years after Ibn Taymiyya's death.²¹ Although al-Subkī devotes much space to quoting Qur'ānic verses supporting the eternity of the Fire, he writes at the very beginning of the treatise, "The doctrine of the Muslims is that the Garden and the Fire will not pass away. Abū Muḥammad b. Ḥazm has transmitted that this is held by consensus and that whoever opposes it is an unbeliever by consensus" (p. 32). That is, to suggest that the Fire is not eternal is to fall directly into unbelief. Al-Subkī reiterates this elsewhere in the treatise although he is careful to clarify that he does not label any particular person an unbeliever (pp. 47, 85, 89).

Even more telling is how al-Subkī responds to Ibn Taymiyya's charge that there was no consensus among the Salaf. Al-Subkī first expresses disbelief that anyone among the Salaf ever said that the Fire would pass away. But then he explains that some statements of the Salaf should not be taken literally. They require reinterpretation (*ta'wīl*), just as some verses in the Qur'ān and reports in the Hadith require reinterpretation. This is especially so in matters of doctrine upon which Muslims are agreed (p. 59). Al-Subkī later explains that consensus might legitimately be undermined by "transmission of a clear difference (*naql kbilāf ṣarih*)."²² However, he denies that this has occurred on this issue, and he then effectively negates the possibility of a "clear difference" ever emerging by arguing that the reports of the Salaf to which Ibn Taymiyya appeals should be reinterpreted so as "to give a favorable opinion of them

[i.e., the Salaf] (*taḥṣīnan li-l-ẓann bibim*)” (p. 79). For al-Subki, the classical scholarly consensus is binding and earlier testimony must be read charitably in its light.

Al-Subki’s argument from consensus is still invoked today. In a 1986 book on Paradise and the Fire, Sulaymān al-Ashqar likewise cites Ibn Ḥazm’s assertion of consensus that the Fire will not pass away, and he maintains that this is “the doctrine of the People of the Sunna and the Community.”²² Al-Ashqar observes that Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim are wrong on this doctrine but should not be censured as unbelievers. They were engaged in creative reasoning from authoritative texts (*ijtibād*) and will be rewarded accordingly. If they had been properly informed of the truth, they would have changed to the correct view. Moreover, al-Ashqar explains, early scholars (i.e., Salaf) similarly held views that sometimes disagreed with what eventually became the consensus of the Muslim community. Imām Mālik (d. 179/795), for example, maintained that the invocation “In the name of God, the Merciful, the All-Merciful” found at the head of Qur’ānic suras was not part of the Qur’ān whereas consensus was later reached that it was. Also, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb said that a traveler who could not find water did not have to pray whereas it was agreed in due course that a traveler in such circumstances should pray after performing ritual cleansing with sand.²³ Although al-Ashqar does not make the point explicitly, it is clear that he grants a later scholarly consensus precedence over diversity of views among the Salaf. Ibn Taymiyya’s Salafi methodology turns the tables on this strategy by making diversity among the Salaf grounds for scrutinizing and reconsidering doctrines prevailing among later scholars. One such doctrine that falls under Ibn Taymiyya’s ax, obviously, is the eternity of the Fire, and in this he is followed faithfully by Ibn al-Qayyim.

The fourth section of Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fanā’ al-nār* (pp. 80–83) and the much longer parallel section in Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Ḥādī* (pp. 322–41) are cast as a series of differences between the Garden and the Fire. In reality, they constitute arguments for the perpetuity of the Garden and the limited duration of the Fire and chastisement in it. Ibn Taymiyya provides eight arguments. The first five reiterate textual indications for limited duration of the Fire and need not be recounted here. The sixth through eighth are theological. The sixth argument explains that God’s mercy (*raḥma*) and forgiveness entail the blessing of the Garden. The Garden remains forever as something following necessarily from God’s attributes and names, especially God’s forgiveness and mercy. Chastisement, however, may cease because it is only something created. It does not follow necessarily from God’s names. This of course does not yet prove definitively that chastisement in the Fire will pass away. For that something more is needed, and this is provided in the seventh argument,

where Ibn Taymiyya makes his key theological move. He observes that God's mercy encompasses all things. The Qur'ān says, "[God] has written mercy for Himself" (Q. 6:12), and, in the Hadith, we find, "My mercy precedes my anger,"²⁴ and, "My mercy overcomes my anger."²⁵ So, Ibn Taymiyya reasons, God's mercy precludes chastisement without end. In the eighth argument, Ibn Taymiyya asserts that God has a wise purpose (*ḥikma*) in everything that He does. As he cannot imagine God having any wise purpose in creating everlasting chastisement, chastisement is limited, and its wise purpose is cleansing from sins and purifying souls.

That Ibn Taymiyya should even consider what reason or purpose God might have in everlasting chastisement sets him at odds with the dominant Ash'arī theology of his day. In classical Ash'arism, God does not act for reasons or purposes. The only explanation for what God does is that God wills it. As I have shown elsewhere, Ibn Taymiyya refutes the arguments that support this Ash'arī voluntarism and maintains that God creates everything for wise purposes — evils and all human actions included — such that this is the best possible world. On those few occasions when Ibn Taymiyya is specific about God's wise purposes in evil, he speaks of the lessons that Pharaoh's rebellion and destruction teach us, the humility nurtured by illness and sins, and the expiation of sin gained through suffering. Evil is educational and purifying. It affords opportunity to struggle and advance in the religious life and perfect worship of God alone.²⁶ Probably more than any other factor, this theological optimism spurs Ibn Taymiyya to reconsider the received doctrine that the Fire is eternal. Reports from the likes of 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbās noted above and the Salafī hermeneutic that allows reading them afresh certainly play their parts, but, more fundamentally, everlasting Fire undermines Ibn Taymiyya's vision of a God who wisely creates all creatures and draws them to love and worship only Him.

This optimism comes into full flower with a strongly therapeutic hue in the much more extensive parallel section of Ibn al-Qayyim's *Ḥādī*. Ibn al-Qayyim rejects the Ash'arī notion that God creates some people from the outset to languish eternally in the Fire. He clarifies that God does not create anyone to be an unbeliever essentially. There is no such thing as unbelief and associationism that cannot be removed, and no one is beyond the pale of being made fit for the Garden. God created everyone with a natural constitution (*fiṭra*) to love God and confess His unity, and God's wise purpose in chastisement is not vengeance but cleansing (pp. 324–26). The punishment of the Fire is not fundamentally a matter of retribution but therapy. Ibn al-Qayyim writes, "Trial and punishment are the remedies appointed to remove maladies. They are not removed by any other means. And the Fire is the Great Remedy" (p. 332). At another point, he says:

The wise purpose [of God] — Glory be to Him — required that He make a remedy (*dawāʿ*) appropriate to each malady (*dāʿ*) and that the remedy for the malady be among the most toilsome of remedies. The Compassionate Physician cauterizes one who is ill with the Fire, cauterization after cauterization, to remove the vile matter besmirching the upright nature (p. 326).²⁷

Ultimately, argues Ibn al-Qayyim in *Hādī*, there can be no benefit or profit in everlasting punishment for anyone. It would be of no profit to God because God is above gaining anything from punishing human beings. At the human level, eternal punishment of the wretched does not increase the blessedness of God's beloved, and it certainly is of no benefit to those who suffer under it. Punishment and chastisement can only be a means to a greater end (p. 327).

Similar to Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim also explains in *Hādī* that the Garden is a necessary product of God's mercy and likewise the Fire a product of God's anger (*ghaḍab*). Now, since we know that God's mercy will overcome God's anger, it follows that the effects of God's mercy will overcome the effects of God's anger (pp. 323–24, 333). Moreover, Ibn al-Qayyim clarifies, God's good pleasure and mercy are essential attributes having no limit while God's anger and wrath are not essential and thus do not need to last forever (p. 327). Ultimately, there is no good reason for evils like the Fire not to end. Ibn al-Qayyim states, "It is not in the divine wise purpose that evils remain perpetually without end and without interruption forever such that [evils] and goods would be equivalent in this" (p. 341).

To review: Ibn Taymiyya never states categorically in *Fanāʿ al-nār* that the Fire and its chastisement will pass away. However, this is certainly the burden of his argument, and it is not without reason that later critics attribute this view to him. Ibn Taymiyya breaks with the classical Sunnī consensus that the Fire is eternal by appealing to diversity among the Salaf. He interprets sayings of the Companions and early exegetical traditions on key Qurʾānic texts to support the Fire's passing away, and he employs theological arguments from God's mercy and wise purpose to render the Fire's end inevitable. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya employs the same Salafī hermeneutic and follows Ibn Taymiyya's exegesis and argumentation very closely in *Hādī*, often elaborating on his teacher. Elaboration is most evident as Ibn al-Qayyim develops his therapeutic rationale for the Fire and its eventual passing. The mercy and wise purpose of God work everything to the benefit of all, and retribution fades far from Ibn al-Qayyim's horizon.

Yet, at the very end of his disquisition in *Hādī* and after explaining that he has finished presenting arguments for both sides of the issue, Ibn al-Qayyim raises the question of where he himself stands. In reply, he quotes, "Surely

your Lord does whatever He wills” (Q. 11:107), and he observes that this was the position of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet’s Muḥammad’s cousin and son-in-law. This final comment is so short that it is understandable that Abrahamov and others have not picked up on the agnosticism that it expresses.²⁸ Yet, it does prevent concluding unreservedly from *Hādī* that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya believes that the Fire will pass away. Moreover, Ibn al-Qayyim spells out this agnosticism on the duration of chastisement in the Fire more clearly in another text, his *Shifā’*.

Salafī Agnosticism in *Shifā’*

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s *Shifā’* is a large tome on divine determination (*qadar*), human agency and theodicy. Following in the footsteps of Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim elaborates a theodicy of optimism in which God creates everything in the best possible way for wise purposes. Pure evil does not exist. Evil that exists is evil relative only to those who suffer under it, but it is good in God’s overarching wise purpose. In the course of *Shifā’*, Ibn al-Qayyim addresses numerous problems of evil, one of which is everlasting Fire. As Ibn al-Qayyim puts the question, “What pleasure or good ensues from severe chastisement that does not break off or abate?” (p. 540, Ch. 22, part way into Aspect 36).

Ibn al-Qayyim’s answer in *Shifā’* first discusses the natural constitution (*fiṭra*) of the human being, how God’s mercy overtakes His anger, and textual evidence that chastisement in the Fire does not continue forever (pp. 544–57). Then follow a refutation of proofs for the perpetuity of the Fire (pp. 557–61) and an account of differences between the Garden and the Fire (pp. 561–64). The structural similarities of this treatment to Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Hādī* and Ibn Taymiyya’s *Fanā’ al-nār* are evident, but in *Shifā’* Ibn al-Qayyim reorders the material somewhat and writes with greater freedom. This suggests that *Shifā’* is later than *Hādī*. However, insufficient work has been done on a chronology of Ibn al-Qayyim’s texts to verify this independently. What we do know is that *Shifā’* is among Ibn al-Qayyim’s later writings.²⁹

The arguments in *Shifā’* are those of *Hādī* and need not be rehearsed here. However, Ibn al-Qayyim in *Shifā’* does inquire into what follows necessarily from God’s attributes in a sharper and more difficult way. As we saw above, Ibn al-Qayyim argues that mercy and good pleasure are essential attributes of God while anger and wrath are not. Thus, what follows necessarily from God’s anger, namely, the Fire, does not have to last forever. Now, what if chastisement is understood to follow not from God’s non-essential attribute of anger but necessarily from God’s justice (*‘adl*), might (*‘izza*) and wise purpose? Would not chastisement then be everlasting because it follows from these essential attributes of God? Ibn al-Qayyim rejects this conclusion. Rather,

he argues, these attributes are fully operative even when chastisement has achieved its aims. It is not that God's attributes of justice, might and wise purpose no longer function when chastisement ends. It is rather that God's justice, might and wise purpose specify when chastisement is best brought to an end. Chastisement falls entirely within the scope of these attributes, which in turn come under the purview of God's mercy. Here is how Ibn al-Qayyim puts it:

If it is said, "Chastisement emanates from His might, His wise purpose and His justice. These are beautiful names and attributes of perfection. What emanates from them is perpetual by virtue of their perpetuity," it is said, "By God, chastisement indeed emanates from might, wise purpose and justice. The end [of chastisement], when what is intended is obtained, emanates from might, wise purpose and justice."³⁰ Chastisement and its interruption do not fall outside the sphere of His might, His wise purpose and His justice. However, when it ends, might is conjoined with mercy, and mercy is conjoined with liberality, beneficence, pardon and forgiveness. Might and wise purpose do not cease and do not decrease. On the contrary, everything that He created, that He creates, that He commanded and that He commands emanates from His might and His wise purpose" (p. 562).

Apart from this, the most significant new material in *Shifā'* comes at the end of Ibn al-Qayyim's discussion. Here he relates his encounter with Ibn Taymiyya that produced the "famous work" *Fanā' al-nār* — this passage was quoted above — and then he sets out his own view. As we have seen, Ibn al-Qayyim ends his treatment in *Hādī* by citing 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and very briefly leaving the duration of the Fire to God's will. In *Shifā'*, he makes this agnosticism more explicit by quoting the sayings of several more of the Salaf:

In this issue I follow the statement of the Prince of the Believers 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib — God be pleased with him. He mentioned that the People of the Garden enter the Garden and the People of the Fire enter the Fire. He described that very well, and then he said, "After that, God does with His creatures what He wills."

And [I] follow the doctrine of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās — God be pleased with both of them — where he says, "It is not necessary for anyone to judge God with respect to His creatures or to assign them to a garden or a fire." He mentioned this in his commentary on His statement, "He will say, 'The Fire will be your dwelling place, dwelling in it forever, except as God wills'" (Q. 6:128).

And [I] follow the doctrine of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī where he says, "The whole Qur'ān comes down to this verse: 'Surely your Lord does whatever He wills'" (Q. 11:107).

And [I] follow the doctrine of Qatāda where he says about His statement, “Except as your Lord wills” (Q. 11:107): “God is all-knowing about His clarification of what happens.”

And [I] follow the doctrine of Ibn Zayd where he says, “God has informed us what He wills for the People of the Garden. He said, ‘A gift never cut off’ (Q. 11:108). He did not inform us what He wills for the People of the Fire.”

The statement, “The Fire and its chastisement are perpetual by virtue of God’s perpetuity,” is a report about God concerning what He will do. If it does not correspond to what He reports about Himself concerning that, then it is speaking ill of Him without knowledge. And the authoritative texts do not lead us to understand that. God knows better (p. 565).

At the end of this passage from *Shifā’*, Ibn al-Qayyim renders theological arguments for the perpetuity of the Fire from God’s perpetuity void because they lack any foundation in authoritative texts. Yet, he also does not have a text from the Qur’ān and the Hadith saying categorically that the Fire will pass away. To again quote Ibn Zayd: “[God] did not inform us what He wills for the People of the Fire.” Moreover, following Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim cannot find any consensus among the Salaf on the matter, and it goes without saying that the classical Sunnī consensus on the Fire’s perpetuity is of no account to him.

What Ibn al-Qayyim does have are three things. First, he has reports from Companions of the Prophet like ‘Umar and Abū Hurayra indicating that everyone will eventually leave the Fire. Second, he has reports from ‘Alī, Ibn ‘Abbās and others leaving the matter to God’s will. Third, he has powerful theological arguments from God’s mercy and wise purpose that the Fire will pass away. Ibn al-Qayyim could use his theological arguments to tilt the balance in favor of Companion reports that the Fire will pass away, but this he does not do. Instead, in *Shifā’*, as in *Hādī*, he leaves aside his theological arguments and takes his stand with the agnostic strand of reports coming from the Salaf: the duration of the Fire must be left to God’s inscrutable will. Yet, it appears that Ibn al-Qayyim is not entirely satisfied with this position. In a later work, he tips the balance in the other direction.

Salafī and Theological Universalism in *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawā’iq al-mursala*

Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Al-Ṣawā’iq al-mursala* (The Thunderbolts Sent Out) is an extensive work of theology written after *Hādī*, which is mentioned in the text. It was the editor of *Ṣawā’iq*, Alī b. Muḥammad al-Dakhīl Allāh, who discovered the note on a manuscript of *Hādī* dating it to 745/1344–45 that I

mentioned above. Thus, al-Dakhil Allāh concludes, *Ṣawāʿiq* must have been written after *Hādī* and after that date. However, *Ṣawāʿiq* is not Ibn al-Qayyim's final work before his death in 751/1350 because it is mentioned in turn in two later writings.³¹ Additionally, Joseph Bell surmises that *Ṣawāʿiq* was written after *Shifāʿ*.³²

The published version of *Ṣawāʿiq* and the manuscripts upon which it is based contain only the first half of the work. The editor al-Dakhil Allāh was unable to locate any manuscripts containing the second half. As the first half does not discuss the duration of the Fire, we only know that Ibn al-Qayyim treats this question in *Ṣawāʿiq* by examining *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʿiq al-mursala*, an abridgement of the whole of *Ṣawāʿiq* by Ibn al-Qayyim's contemporary Muḥammad b. al-Mawṣilī (d. 774/1372).³³

The question that then presents itself is whether we may rely on *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʿiq*, itself a very large work, to convey an adequate sense of Ibn al-Qayyim's original text and intention. The editors of both *Ṣawāʿiq* and *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʿiq* compare the two to assess the character of Ibn al-Mawṣilī's abridgment of the extant part of the former. Al-Dakhil Allāh, as editor of four hefty volumes of *Ṣawāʿiq*, is understandably alarmed at the great amount of interesting material excised in *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʿiq*, but he does not accuse Ibn al-Mawṣilī of compromising the text that remains or Ibn al-Qayyim's overall argument.³⁴ The editor of *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʿiq*, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAlawī, observes that al-Mawṣilī often drops or combines aspects of Ibn al-Qayyim's arguments and sometimes eliminates entire sections but only rarely adds a note of his own or rearranges the order of the text.³⁵ In short, we cannot know exactly how Ibn al-Mawṣilī abridged the material on the Fire in *Ṣawāʿiq*, but, with this due qualification, *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʿiq* appears to provide sufficiently reliable access to the main lines of Ibn al-Qayyim's thought to warrant serious consideration. For the sake of economy, I will refer to *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʿiq* from here on as Ibn al-Qayyim's work.

Ibn al-Qayyim discusses the Fire's duration in *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʿiq* in the latter half of a long investigation on the problem of evil (pp. 544–690, following Aspect 53 of the second “Ṭāghūt”). His style here is much more fluid than in *Hādī* or *Shifāʿ*, and he is no longer dependent on Ibn Taymiyya's *Fanāʿ al-nār* to structure his argument. This corroborates evidence noted above that *Ṣawāʿiq* is later than both *Hādī* and *Shifāʿ*.

Ibn al-Qayyim explains that God's wise purpose in the creation of Iblis and other purveyors of evil is to make known the good from the bad and to bless believers by providing them opposition against which to strive in the way of God. It is objected, however, that this is of no benefit either to Iblis and his minions or to unbelievers who are consigned to merely instrumental roles in God's economy (pp. 625–31). Ibn al-Qayyim responds to this objection in

twenty-two points. The first two points (pp. 631–41) and the last four (pp. 686–90) do not deal directly with the duration of the Fire and need not detain us here. The intervening sixteen points deploy the full range of arguments developed in *Hādī* and *Shifā'* against the eternity of the Fire and for its passing away to show that everyone will ultimately benefit from God's ways with the world. Ibn al-Qayyim never says clearly that Iblīs will enter the Garden, but this is implied (pp. 642–85).

Roughly speaking, Ibn al-Qayyim's arguments in *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawā'iq* proceed from the theological to the textual. The discussion begins with the long third point affirming that God's mercy will prevail over all (pp. 642–63). The alleged consensus on the eternity of the Fire is not refuted until the seventeenth point (pp. 680–81). Along the way, Ibn al-Qayyim quotes the applicable sayings of the Salaf and interprets the requisite Qur'ānic texts. He calls the Fire a whip that God created "to lead His servants to His mercy and His Garden" (p. 664), and he explains that the causes and aims of evil things will pass away and only that which is desired for the sake of God's face will last forever (pp. 670–71). At the end of his tenth point, Ibn al-Qayyim sums up his fundamental theological argument:

These points and others make evident that the wise purpose and benefit in the creation of the Fire require that it remain as long as the cause and the wise purpose for which it was created remain. When the cause ceases and the wise purpose has been achieved, the matter returns to the preceding, overcoming, encompassing mercy (p. 671).

A new argument in *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawā'iq* that I have not found in *Hādī* or *Shifā'* brings out the unfairness of punishing unbelief with eternal Fire. It would go against God's justice and blessing, Ibn al-Qayyim maintains, to consign someone to everlasting chastisement for unbelief and associationism that are of only limited duration.³⁶ It might be objected that everlasting punishment is indeed fitting for someone who at least intends to continue in unbelief and associationism forever. Ibn al-Qayyim responds that this would benefit no one. Rather, he is confident that the pain of chastisement will achieve the desired result: "It is not in human nature to persist in these means [of unbelief] and to prefer them after suffering harshly from them for a long time" (pp. 656–58, quote on 658).

In *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawā'iq*, Ibn al-Qayyim also mentions the agnostic option on the duration of chastisement that he presented as his own view in *Hādī* and *Shifā'*. This time, however, it appears early in his discussion, at the end of his third point on God's mercy. Here, Ibn al-Qayyim does not himself consign the matter to God's will. Rather, he chides those who do not follow his theological

and rational arguments to their logical conclusions, and he coaxes and even dares his reader to believe firmly that all chastisement will come to an end. Agnosticism remains an option only for those who lack insight:

Those who say that the chastisement of unbelievers is a benefit to them and a mercy to them circle around this sense and do not penetrate its depth. But what benefit to them is there in chastisement that does not end, that is perpetual by virtue of the perpetuity of the Lord — Most High is He?! Ponder this point very thoroughly, and give it its due reflection. Join that with the senses of His names and His attributes, with what His word and the word of His Messenger indicate, and with what the Companions and those after them said. Do not rush to speak without knowledge or to condemn. If the dawn of what is correct shines on you, [that is good]. If not, then ascribe the judgment to what God ascribes it in His statement, “Surely your Lord does whatever He wills” (Q. 11:107), and hold firm to the statement of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib — May God be pleased with him. He mentioned that the People of the Garden enter the Garden and the People of the Fire enter the Fire. He described their state. Then he said, “After that, God does what He wills” (p. 663).

To reiterate the challenge: Ibn al-Qayyim calls on his readers to bring together the theological arguments from God’s names and attributes, the evidence from revelation and the Salaf, and rational considerations of benefit to conclude that chastisement will indeed pass away. Only universal salvation could be of ultimate benefit to unbelievers. To those who cannot yet grasp this, Ibn al-Qayyim counsels leaving the matter to God’s will. It is evident that Ibn al-Qayyim has overcome his own apprehension and now believes that everlasting chastisement will definitely end and the Fire pass away. With this, he continues on in *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawā’iq*, setting out fifteen more points in favor of this view.

Conclusion

In deliberating on the duration of Hell-Fire, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya appropriates a Salafī hermeneutic and a body of Salafī interpretations from his teacher Ibn Taymiyya. For both scholars, the hermeneutic precludes granting authority to any consensus coming later than the first three Muslim generations. Only a consensus among the Salaf is binding. As this does not exist on the eternity of the Fire, the classical Sunnī consensus on this matter is called into question. Moreover, some reports from the Companions of the Prophet indicate that chastisement in the Fire will end while other reports leave the question to God’s will.

Ibn al-Qayyim also adopts Ibn Taymiyya’s theodicy of optimism. All things are ultimately good by virtue of God’s wise purpose, and God’s mercy will

prevail over all. The Fire is a great remedy that purifies and reforms even unbelievers and associators. Ibn al-Qayyim elaborates these arguments far more fully than does his master, but he hesitates in *Ḥādī* and *Shifāʾ* to adopt them unequivocally as his own. Instead, he leaves the duration of the Fire to God's will, following various reports from the Salaf expressing agnosticism and leaving aside certain Companion reports indicating that chastisement in the Fire will end. In the later *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawāʾiq al-mursala*, Ibn al-Qayyim abandons his reserve and follows the theological argument from God's mercy to its logical conclusion that chastisement will come to an end for all. The predominance of God's mercy and the rationale of therapeutic restoration fully overtake the logic of retribution inherent in the doctrine of perpetual Fire.

Whether adopting an agnostic position on the duration of the Fire and the chastisement of unbelievers in it or arguing theologically for an Islamic universalism without reserve, Ibn al-Qayyim depends on his Salafi hermeneutic to bypass the deeply held classical consensus that the Fire will definitely remain forever. This is a courageous move, even as Ibn al-Qayyim obviously stands on Ibn Taymiyya's shoulders. The Salafi approach to religious authority found little resonance in the Muslim society of Ibn al-Qayyim's day and for centuries thereafter. Yet, it has been widely employed in the modern period, a period characterized by rationalism, displacement of traditional authority, and, for the religiously-minded, desire to return to the pristine original sources of the faith. For Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, as well as for modern Salafis, the Salaf offer an alternative source of authority with which to undermine classical Sunnism and its stewards. As we learn from Ibn al-Qayyim's deliberations on the duration of the Fire, this can open up some intriguing avenues for theological reflection.

Endnotes

1. See W. Montgomery Watt, trans., *Islamic Creeds: A Selection* (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), for this doctrine in several Sunnī creeds: al-Taḥāwī (d. 321/933) (pp. 53–54), al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) (p. 78), al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142) (p. 82), and al-Ījī (d. 756/1355) (p. 88). See Earl Edgar Elder, trans., *A Commentary on the Creed of Islam: Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī on the Creed of Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 104–15, for al-Taftāzānī's (d. 793/1390) explanation of the rationale for these doctrines.

2. Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, Revised ed. (Cambridge, UK: The Islamic Texts Society, 1991), 168ff.; and Bernard G. Weiss, *The Search for God's Law: Islamic Jurisprudence in the Writings of Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1992), 181ff., especially 210–11.

3. See for example Ibn Ḥazm, *Marātib al-ijmāʿ fī al-ibādāt wa al-muʿāmalāt wa al-muʿtaqadāt*, 3d printing (Beirut: Dār al-āfāq al-jadīda, 1402/1982), 193; Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, *Abkār al-afkār fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Mahdī, 5 vols. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat dār

al-kutub wa al-wathā'iq al-qawmiyya, 1423–25/2002–4), 4:360; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa al-muta'akkbirīn min al-'ulamā' wa al-ḥukamā' wa al-mutakallimīn*, ed. Ṭaha 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd (Cairo: Maktabat al-kulliyāt al-azhariyya, n.d.), 237; Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. Faraḥ al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Tadhkira fī aḥwāl al-mawtā wa-umūr al-ākbara* (Ṣaydā/Bayrūt: Al-Maktaba al-'aṣriyya, 1426/2005), 2:149; and 'Aḍud al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al-Ījī, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* (with the commentary of al-Jurjānī), 3 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1417/1997), 3:397, which reads, “The Muslims have reached a consensus that the unbelievers will abide in the Fire forever; their chastisement will not be cut off.”

4. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-kabīr li-l-Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-bahiyya al-miṣriyya, 1357/1938), 18:63–67, in commentary on Q. 11:107. After surveying the textual and rational proofs of those who say “that the chastisement of the unbelievers is limited and has an end,” al-Rāzī evaluates the arguments of “the great majority” who “have agreed that the chastisement of the unbeliever is perpetual” (p. 63).

5. As seen for example in 'Alī b. 'Alī Jābir al-Ḥarbī, *Kashf al-astār li-ibtāl iddī'ā fanā' al-nār al-mansūb li-Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya wa tilmidhibi Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya* (Mecca: Dār ṭayyiba, 1410/1990), 34–43; 'Abd al-Karīm b. Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥumayd, *Al-Inkār 'alā man lam ya'taqid kbulūd wa tā'bid al-kuffār fī al-nār* (Burayda, Saudi Arabia: Markaz al-Nujaydī, 1422/2001), 138 and passim; and 'Ā'isha bint Yūsuf al-Manā'ī, “Aqīdat fanā' al-nār bayna Ibn 'Arabī wa Ibn Taymiyya wa Ibn al-Qayyim,” *Majallat markaz buḥūth al-sunna wa al-sīra* (University of Qatar) 11 (2004): 85–141. I am grateful to G. A.

Lipton for drawing the last reference to my attention. Al-Ḥarbī, *Kashf al-astār*, 49–52, also identifies four texts in Ibn al-Qayyim's writings that, in his estimation, unequivocally affirm the eternity of the Fire. Although these texts cannot be discounted, they are very short and do not deliberate on the question. I am preparing a separate study on al-Ḥarbī's argumentation.

6. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Shifā' al-'alīl fī masā'il al-qadā' wa al-qadar wa al-ḥikma wa al-ta'līl*, ed. Al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Sayyid and Sa'īd Maḥmūd (Cairo: Dār al-ḥadīth, 1414/1994). Page references to *Shifā'* will appear in the text.

7. On 'Abd b. Ḥamīd, see Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden: Brill, 1967–), 1:113. Sezgin does not list any extant manuscripts of 'Abd b. Ḥamīd's commentary.

8. Yāqūt b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥamawī, *Kitāb mu'jam al-buldān*, 10 parts (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-sa'āda, 1324/1906), 6:99.

9. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Ḥādī al-arwāḥ ilā bilād al-afrah*, ed. Ṭaha 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd (Cairo: Dār iḥyā' al-kutub al-'arabiyya, n.d.), 307–41, in Chapter 67.

10. This information is found in the catalog of the Mosul Library of Public Endowments manuscript collection compiled by Sālim 'Abd al-Razzāq Aḥmad, *Fibris makbūṭāt Maktabat al-awqāf al-'amma fī al-Mawṣil*, 2d ed., 8 vols. (Baghdad: Wizārat al-awqāf wa-al-shu'ūn al-dīniyya, 1982–83), 2:31 (ms. 6/2). This manuscript of *Ḥādī* was copied in 1280/1863–64.

11. Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Amīr al-Ṣan'ānī, *Raf' al-astār li-ibtāl adillat al-qā'ilīn bi-fanā' al-nār*, ed. Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1405/1984).

12. Al-Ḥarbī, *Kashf al-astār*, 77–78.

13. Binyamin Abrahamov, “The Creation and Duration of Paradise and Hell in Islamic Theology,” *Der Islam* 79 (2002): 87–102, especially 95ff. Two earlier studies come to the same conclusion concerning Ibn al-Qayyim. Şoubḥī el-Şāleḥ, *La Vie future selon le Coran* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1971), 56–60, sets out Ibn al-Qayyim's arguments in *Ḥādī* and concludes that he affirms the annihilation of the Fire. Jane Idleman Smith and Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad,

The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981), survey Ibn al-Qayyim's arguments in *Hādī* more briefly and similarly state that he favors "the eventual dissolution of the Fire" (p. 94). However, Smith and Haddad mistakenly infer that this is the predominant doctrine of the whole Muslim community (p. 95 and p. 220 n. 98).

14. Ibn Taymiyya, *Al-Radd 'alā man qāla bi-fanā' al-janna wa al-nār* [hereafter *Fanā' al-nār*], ed. Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Simharī (Riyadh: Dār al-balansiyya, 1415/1995). Al-Simharī discusses the work's authenticity on pp. 12–16. I am indebted to Mohammad Hassan Khalil for drawing my attention to this text and making it available to me. Khalil's, "Muslim Scholarly Discussions on Salvation and the Fate of 'Others'" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2007), 105–66, covers some of the same ground as the present article, but with different concerns and insights. At an earlier date (1405/1984), Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī published a portion of *Fanā' al-nār* in the introduction to his edition of al-Ṣan'ānī, *Raf' al-astār*, 9–14 (corresponding to al-Simharī's edition, 52–57 and 80–83), with photographs of the source manuscript on pp. 53–55.

15. Caterina Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare Analisi delle fonti classiche della sua biografia*, Supplemento N. 1., *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali*, Vol. 76 (Pisa/Roma: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 2003), 163. I am grateful to the author for alerting me to this discussion.

16. Ibn Rushayyiq al-Maghribī, "Asmā' mu'allafāt Ibn Taymiyya," in *Al-Jāmi' li-sīrat Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya (661–728) kbilāl sab'at qurūn* [hereafter *Jāmi'*], ed. Muḥammad 'Uzayr Shams and Ali b. Muḥammad 'Imrān (Mecca: Dār 'ālam al-fawā'id, 1420/1999–2000), 225. This list of Ibn Taymiyya's works was earlier attributed to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Asmā' mu'allafāt Ibn Taymiyya*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Damascus: Maṭbū'āt al-majma' al-'ilmī al-'arabī, 1953). Shams and 'Imrān, *Jāmi'*, 8–13, argue persuasively that this attribution was incorrect; their arguments are briefly summarized in Jon Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya's Theodicy of Perpetual Optimism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 6–7 n. 14. The list edited by al-Munajjid does not include the notice quoted from Ibn Rushayyiq here. However, the lists edited by al-Munajjid, 12, and Shams and 'Imrān, *Jāmi'*, 225, both mention that Ibn Taymiyya wrote an interpretation on the exception in the verse, "Abiding in [the Fire], as long as the Heavens and the Earth endure, except as your Lord wills" (Q. 11:107–8). The list in *Jāmi'* presents this interpretation and *Fanā' al-nār* consecutively as two separate works.

17. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalil b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān al-'aṣr wa a'wān al-naṣr*, ed. 'Alī Abū Zayd, *et al.*, 6 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-fikr al-mu'āṣir, 1418/1998), 1:242, in the biographical entry on Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm (Ibn Taymiyya), also in *Jāmi'*, 294. *Fanā' al-nār* is also mentioned in other lists of Ibn Taymiyya's works: Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Hādī, *Al-'Uqūd al-durriyya min manāqib Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad b. Taymiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, n.d.), 67; al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, vol. 7, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1969), 26, in *Jāmi'*, 317; and Muḥammad b. Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt wa al-dhayl 'alayhā*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1973), 1:78, in *Jāmi'*, 331. Additionally, al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfi*, and al-Kutubī include the note that Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī refuted Ibn Taymiyya's treatise. According to Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya*, 163 n. 130, al-Kutubī is here copying al-Ṣafadī.

18. The contemporary chroniclers Ibn Kathīr and al-Nuwayrī differ on the date of this event, citing 9 and 19 Jumādā al-ākhira, respectively. See Abū al-Fidā' Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāya wa al-nihāya*, 14 vols. (Beirut: Maktabat al-ma'ārif, 1966), 14:134; and Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab*, vol. 33, ed. Muṣṭafā Ḥijāzī (Cairo: Maṭba'at dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya, 1997), 265, also in *Jāmi'*, 131.

19. So argues al-Rāzī, *Al-Taḥfīr*, 18:66.

20. Abdul Hakim I. al-Matroudi, *The Ḥanbalī School of Law and Ibn Taymiyyah: Conflict or Conciliation* (London: Routledge, 2006), 57–59, 186–87; and Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Takī-d-Din Aḥmad b. Taimiyya, canoniste ḥanbalite né à Harrān en 661/1262, mort à Damas en 728/1328* (Cairo: Imprimerie de l'institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1939), 239–42.

21. Abū Ḥasan 'Alī Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Al-I'tibār bi-baqā' al-janna wa al-nār*, ed. Ṭaha al-Dusūqī Ḥubayshī (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-fajr al-jadīd, 1987). Al-Subkī never mentions Ibn Taymiyya by name in this text. He only speaks of having come across a composition by a contemporary (p. 56). The editor Ḥubayshī claims throughout his notes that al-Subkī is responding to Ibn al-Qayyim's *Ḥādī*. This is possible chronologically. As noted above, there is evidence that *Ḥādī* dates to 745/1344–45, well before Dhū al-Ḥijja 748/1348, the date al-Subkī tells us that he composed his text (p. 90). It is far more likely, however, that al-Subkī is responding directly to Ibn Taymiyya's earlier *Fanā' al-nār*. Most of what al-Subkī puts in the mouth of his dialectical opponent comes straight from Ibn Taymiyya's treatise, including text that Ibn al-Qayyim fails to quote in *Ḥādī*. Additionally, al-Subkī includes nothing from *Ḥādī* not already found in Ibn Taymiyya's *Fanā' al-nār*. It remains possible, however, that al-Subkī refutes *Fanā' al-nār* in order to contest Ibn al-Qayyim's use of it.

22. 'Umar Sulaymān 'Abd Allāh al-Ashqar, *Al-Janna wa al-nār* (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 1426/2005 [1406/1986]), 39, in English as 'Umar S. al-Ashqar, *Paradise and Hell in the Light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah*, trans. Nasiruddin al-Khattab (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2002), 57.

23. Al-Ashqar, *Al-Janna*, 43–44 (Arabic), 62–63 (English).

24. Bukhārī, 6998, Al-Tawḥīd, Qawl Allāh ta'ālā bal huwa Qur'ān majīd fī lawḥ maḥfūz (hadith numbers are those used at <http://www.al-islam.com>), English version in Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān (trans.), *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī: Arabic–English* (Medina: Dār al-fikr, n.d.), 9:482 (No. 642).

25. Muslim, 4941, Al-Tawba, Fī sa'at raḥmat Allāh, English version in 'Abdul Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, n.d.) 4:1437.

26. Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya's Theodicy*, especially 26–29, 70–102, 190–95.

27. Moshe Perlmann, "Ibn Qayyim and the Devil," in *Studi Orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*, vol. 2 (Rome: Istituto per l'oriente, 1956), 330–37, is not of direct interest to the current study, but the article does provide evidence of Ibn al-Qayyim's therapeutic outlook. See also in this regard Gino Schallenberg, "The Diseases of the Heart: A Spiritual Pathology by Ibn Qayyim al-Ġawziyya," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras: Proceedings of the 6th, 7th and 8th International Colloquium organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in May 1997, 1998 and 1999*, ed. U. Vermeulen and J. Van Steenberg (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 421–28.

28. El-Şāleḥ, *La Vie future*, 60, does take note of Ibn al-Qayyim's agnostic comment but still says that he affirms the annihilation of the Fire.

29. Joseph Norment Bell, *Love Theory in Later Ḥanbalite Islam* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1979), 96, 102.

30. The Arabic of this sentence in the Dār al-ḥadīth (Cairo, 1994) edition of *Shifā'* is irregular and has been emended by reference to the edition of Dār al-kutub al-ilmīyya (Beirut, n.d.), 433.

31. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Kitāb al-ṣawā'iq al-mursala 'alā al-Jahmiyya wa al-mu'attila*, ed. 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Dakhīl Allāh, 4 vols., 1st printing (Riyadh: Dār al-Āshīma, 1408/1987–88). See pp. 82–83 for al-Dakhīl Allāh's dating of this work. *Ḥādī* is mentioned by its alternative title *Ṣifat al-janna* on p. 1332. The two later writings mentioning *Ṣawā'iq* are Ibn al-Qayyim's *Madārij al-sālikīn* and *Ighāthat al-lahfān*. These are available in print in several different editions each.

32. Bell, *Love Theory*, 96 and 242 n. 34.

33. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Mukhtaṣar al-ṣawā'iq al-mursala 'alā al-Jahmiyya wa al-mu'aṭṭila*, abridgement (*ikhtiṣār*) by Muḥammad b. al-Mawṣilī, ed. al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-'Alawī (Riyadh: Maktabat aḍwā' al-salaf, 1425/2004), pdf file accessed July 2007 at http://www.archive.org/details/muktsr_swaik_mursla. This edition by al-'Alawī is based upon a number of manuscripts, some very early, and it is better than the edition of Sayyid Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-ḥadīth, 1414/1994), which I have also consulted. See al-'Alawī's Introduction (pp. 30–35, 60–63) for attribution of this abridgement to Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm, known as Ibn al-Mawṣilī.

34. See al-Dakhīl Allāh's Introduction to *Ṣawā'iq*, 117–25.

35. See al-'Alawī's Introduction to *Mukhtaṣar*, 74–77.

36. According to al-Rāzī, *Al-Taḥṣīn*, 18:63, the injustice of punishing disobedience of finite duration with everlasting Fire is one of two rational considerations cited by those who interpret Q. 11:107 to mean that chastisement of unbelievers will end. The second is that everlasting punishment is of no profit to anyone, an argument also employed by Ibn al-Qayyim in what follows here and in *Ḥādī* and *Shifā'*.