

The Apologetic and Pastoral Intentions of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's Polemic against Jews and Christians

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The Mongol destruction of Baghdad in 1258 and subsequent Mongol incursions into Syria through the early 1300s ushered in a period of great political and religious anxiety in the Near East. The Mongol Ilkhanid rulers of Persia and Iraq corralled the Christian Armenians of Cilicia to their side and sought an alliance with the Franks in the west against the Mamlūk sultans of Syria and Egypt. The Ilkhanids converted to Islam only very slowly with the Ilkhan ruler Oljeitu (d. 1316) being particularly indecisive. Baptized a Christian, Oljeitu converted to Buddhism, then to Sunnism and finally to Shī'ism, which put him further at odds with the Mamlūk champions of Sunnism. The Frankish Crusaders relinquished their last Levantine territories in the late 1200s, but they continued to be a thorn in the flesh to the Mamlūks from Cyprus.¹

This climate of religio-political competition formed the backdrop for the writing of several major Muslim refutations of Christianity in the Mamlūk sultanate. Three of these responded directly or indirectly to a letter written by Paul of Antioch, Melkite Bishop of Sidon, probably in the early 1200s. Paul undermined Islam's claim to universality by arguing that it was intended only for the pagan Arabs and that the Qur'ān confirmed Christian doctrine. Paul was refuted first and directly by Egyptian jurist Aḥmad b. Idrīs

¹ D. O. Morgan, "Öldjeytü," *Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Edition [hereafter EI2], 8:168. Reuven Amitai, "Il-Khanids: I. Dynastic History," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, www.iranica.com/articles/il-khanids-i-dynastic-history, last accessed June 2010. The literature on the Mongols and the Mamlūks is extensive and cannot be reviewed here. Recent works include Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), and Reuven Amitai, *The Mongols in the Islamic Lands: Studies in the History of the Ilkhanate* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007). On Armenian and Syriac Christian relations with the Ilkhānids, see especially David Bundy, "The Syriac and Armenian Christian Responses to the Islamification of the Mongols," in *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*, ed. John Victor Tolan (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), 33–53. Jean R. Michot, *Ibn Taymiyya: Lettre à un roi croisé* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Bruylant-Academia, 1995), provides much detail on Crusader-Mongol-Mamlūk relations at the turn of the fourteenth century.

al-Qarāfi (d. 1285). Later on, an anonymous Christian in Cyprus reworked Paul's letter and sent it to Damascene scholars Ibn Taymiyya in 1316 and Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī in 1321. Both wrote refutations, with Ibn Taymiyya's *Al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ* (The Correct Answer) being the longest response to Christianity in the Islamic tradition and one of the most sophisticated as well.²

The focus of the present study is a fourth Muslim work that came from the pen of Ibn Taymiyya's foremost student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350). Ibn al-Qayyim's *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā fī ajwibat al-Yahūd wa-'l-Naṣārā* (Guidance for the Confused concerning Answers to Jews and Christians) is a long refutation of both Judaism and Christianity probably written in the 1330s.³ As we will see below, it responds to an inquiry from an "unbeliever" whose religious identity is not given. The inquiry undermines unfavorable Muslim characterizations of Jews and Christians and attacks the reliability and morality of Muslim scholars. *Hidāya* has enjoyed a measure of popularity in recent years, appearing in no fewer than eight different Arabic editions since 1978. At least two of these are based on multiple manuscripts and include substantial introductions: the 1996 edition of Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Ḥājj, and the 2008 edition of 'Uthmān Jum'a Dumayriyya used for the present study.⁴

² Rifaat Y. Ebied and David Thomas, eds. *Muslim-Christian Polemic during the Crusades: The Letter from the People of Cyprus and Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī's Response* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), give the background to these texts and provide the *Letter from Cyprus* and al-Dimashqī's response in both English and Arabic. Thomas F. Michel, *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's Al-Jawab Al-Saḥīḥ* (Delmar, NY: Caravan, 1984), introduces Ibn Taymiyya's *Jawāb* and translates an abridgement of the text. See also David Thomas, "Apologetic and Polemic in the *Letter from Cyprus* and Ibn Taymiyya's *Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-Masīḥ*," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 247–65.

³ There is no external evidence by which to date *Hidāya*. Livnat Holtzman, "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography*, ed. Joseph E. Lowry and Devin J. Stewart (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 202–23, groups Ibn al-Qayyim's works into early, middle and later works on the basis of style and internal references to previous works. *Hidāya* is among Ibn al-Qayyim's earlier works. So far as we know, Ibn al-Qayyim wrote all of his books after Ibn Taymiyya's death in 1328.

⁴ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā fī ajwibat al-Yahūd wa-'l-Naṣārā*, ed. 'Uthmān Jum'a Dumayriyya (Mecca, Dār 'ālam al-fawā'id, 1429/2008), available at www.waqfeya.com/book.php?bid=1779, last accessed May 2010; and Muḥammad Aḥmad al-Ḥājj, ed. (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam and Beirut: Dār al-Shāmiyya, 1996). The other six editions that I have identified with named editors are Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqā, ed. ([Cairo]: Al-Maktaba al-qayyima, 1398/[1978]); Sayf al-Dīn al-Kātib, ed. (Beirut: Dār maktabat al-ḥayāh, [1980]); Muḥammad 'Alī Abū al-'Abbās, ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qur'ān, [1990]); 'Alī Ḥammūd, ed. (Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-'aṣriyya, 2000); Sayyid 'Umrān, ed. (Cairo, Dār al-ḥadīth, 2003); Riḍwān Jāmi' Riḍwān, ed. (Mecca: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1425/2004). I was not able to examine the 1990, 2000 and 2004 editions. *Hidāya* also appears on the margin of the latter part of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Salīm Bājah jī zādah (Bājah'chī'zādah), *Al-Fāriq bayna al-makblīq wa-'l-kbāliq* ([Cairo]: Matba'at al-mawsū'at, [1322/1904]), and there have been other printings as well. A very poor English translation has appeared: Imam Allamah Shamsuddeen ibn abi Bakr ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Guidance to the Uncertain in Reply to the Jews and the Nazarenes*, trans. Abedelhay El-Masri (Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyyah, 1422/2001; new corrected ed. 2007/1428). The "corrected" edition remains frequently inaccurate or incomprehensible.

Notwithstanding the abundance of editions, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Hidāya* has long languished in the shadow of Ibn Taymiyya's *Al-Jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ*.⁵ In 1930 Erdmann Fritsch wrote, "[*Hidāya*'s] greater part is a plagiarism of Ibn Taymiyya, with cuts and additions," a judgment repeated nearly 40 years later by George Anawati.⁶ Citing Fritsch, Brocklemann, speaks more forcefully of "the greatest part" of *Hidāya* being plagiarized from Ibn Taymiyya.⁷ This sentiment, which has been expressed in Arabic as well, is effectively countered by Muḥammad al-Ḥājj, the editor of the 1996 edition of *Hidāya*. As al-Ḥājj explains, Ibn al-Qayyim does copy from Ibn Taymiyya, but the borrowing is not so extensive as to make *Hidāya* superfluous. *Hidāya* also draws on sources not found in Ibn Taymiyya, and most importantly, Ibn Taymiyya's *Jawāb* and the work of Ibn al-Qayyim's are distinguished by the very different sets of questions that they address.⁸

That aside, Ibn al-Qayyim's *Hidāya* has yet to receive critical study as a literary unit in a European language. This article seeks to initiate such inquiry. However, one feature of *Hidāya* has drawn the attention of several scholars and even come in for censure. Fritsch ventures a brief comparison between Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn al-Qayyim, noting especially the latter's charge of textual corruption: "On some questions [Ibn al-Qayyim] adopts a different position. For example, on the question of the corruption of the Bible he is more radical than his teacher. He also points to passages in the Gospels that contain contradictions and incredulities, and he declares them inauthentic."⁹ Anawati notes as well the charge of textual corruption and criticizes the "outrageously injurious manner" in which Ibn al-Qayyim speaks against Christians and Jews.¹⁰

In a major study on Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), Abdeliah Ljamai sheds more light on this matter. Ljamai explains that Ibn al-Qayyim in *Hidāya* does indeed draw on Ibn Taymiyya's *Jawāb*, but that when it comes to assertions about the corruption of Jewish and Christian scriptures, he also borrows from the harsher views of Ibn Ḥazm. Ibn Taymiyya takes a moderate stance on corruption. On the one hand he has no doubt that Jews and Christians corrupted the meaning (*taḥrīf al-ma'nā*) of their texts. Had they interpreted their scriptures correctly, they would have recognized Muḥammad as the final Prophet. On the other hand Ibn Taymiyya sees no way of demonstrating or verifying whether Jews and Christians also altered the very words of the texts (*taḥrīf*

⁵ The imagery comes from the title of Caterina Bori and Livnat Holtzman, eds., *A Scholar in the Shadow — Essays in the Legal and Theological Writings of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah*, Oriente Moderno monograph series, 90.1 (2010), forthcoming.

⁶ Erdmann Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter: Beiträge zur Geschichte der muslimischen Polemik gegen das Christentum in arabischer Sprache* (Breslau: Müller & Seifert, 1930), 33; Georges C. Anawati, "Polémique, apologie et dialogue islamo-chrétiens. Positions classiques médiévals et positions contemporaines," *Euntes docete* 22 (1969): 375–451 (at pp. 411–412).

⁷ Carl Brocklemann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Supplement, vol. 2 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1938), 126.

⁸ Al-Ḥājj, ed, *Hidāya*, 163–65. A list of Ibn al-Qayyim's sources is given on pp. 135–39.

⁹ Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum im Mittelalter*, 33.

¹⁰ Anawati, "Polémique," 411–412 (quotation on p. 411).

al-lafẓ). Ibn Ḥazm on the contrary argues for corruption of their very scriptures in his *Kitāb al-fiṣal*, and Ibn al-Qayyim does the same.¹¹

Martin Accad clarifies that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya in *Hidāya* sometimes follows Ibn Ḥazm and at other times Ibn Taymiyya, resulting in “a rather dislocated treatise.”¹² Following Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn al-Qayyim provides much material demonstrating textual corruption of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Yet, along with Ibn Taymiyya, he also implicitly accepts the authenticity of those same scriptures and with unprecedented force argues that they demonstrate the prophethood of Muḥammad. Either way, Accad finds Ibn al-Qayyim’s methodology highly regrettable. Accad detects the spirit of Ibn Ḥazm more fully in Ibn al-Qayyim than in any other medieval Muslim writing on other religions, and he speaks of “the hostile and insulting tone adopted by the author against Christians and Jews in general. The end-result is a blend of aggression and self-indulgent rhetoric, out of touch with any notion of exchange and rapprochement so fundamental to any form of dialogue.”¹³ Moreover, Accad avers, Ibn al-Qayyim interprets Biblical texts to his own liking without reference to their contexts, and his Islamic interpretations of the Bible “reflect an age in which polemical discourse had become an internal Muslim exercise rather than the reflection of a real dialogue.”¹⁴

Accad is certainly correct that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya is engaged in an exercise that is primarily internal to the Muslim community, but research has not yet made clear what the purpose of that exercise is. The present article seeks to sort this out through an examination of the occasion of Ibn al-Qayyim’s writing and a brief review of *Hidāya*’s contents. Inquiring into the purposes of *Hidāya* will set the work’s harshness in a different frame. I will argue that Ibn al-Qayyim’s intention is apologetic and pastoral, that is, he writes to buttress the faith and identity of ordinary Muslims who in an insecure age feel threatened by Christian and Jewish polemic against Islam. Ibn al-Qayyim is unfortunately not interested in a dialogue that seeks to understand Jews and Christians on their own terms. Yet, Ibn al-Qayyim’s polemic is not devoid of a rationale that Jews and Christians might appreciate. As we will see, his express aim is to mitigate Muslim expressions of hostility toward Jews and Christians, and to do this he outlines the apologetic and polemic arguments that he thinks Muslims need in order to withstand challenges to their convictions without lashing out violently. There is no question here

¹¹ Abdeliah Ljamai, *Ibn Ḥazm et la polémique Islamo-Chrétienne dans l’histoire de l’Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 183–190. See Michel, *Response*, 112–120, for discussion of Ibn Taymiyya’s views.

¹² Martin Accad, “Muḥammad’s Advent as the Final Criterion for the Authenticity of the Judeo-Christian Tradition: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s *Hidāyat al-ḥayārā fī ajwibat al-Yabūd wa-l-Naṣārā*,” in *The Three Rings. Textual Studies in the Historical Trialogue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Barbara Roggema, Marcel Poorthuis and Pim Valkenberg (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 217–236 (quotation on p. 219). Accad also discusses Ibn al-Qayyim in “The Ultimate Proof Text: The Interpretation of John 20.17 in Muslim-Christian Dialogue (second/eighth-eighth/fourteenth centuries),” in *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule: Church Life and Scholarship in Abbasid Iraq*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 199–214.

¹³ Accad, “The Ultimate Proof Text,” 211–212; see also Accad, “Muḥammad’s Advent,” 219.

¹⁴ Accad, “The Ultimate Proof Text,” 207.

of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya renouncing violence entirely; he simply rejects it as the first line of defense against Christian and Jewish polemic.¹⁵

The Occasion of Ibn al-Qayyim's Treatise

The end of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's introduction to *Hidāya* relates the occasion that spurred him to write, explains why he wrote, and very briefly outlines his response. The full passage is translated below. The occasion is an altercation between a Muslim and an unbelieving inquirer. The inquirer presents the Muslim with some questions. The Muslim does not know how to answer, and so he beats the unbeliever. The unbelieving inquirer then takes this as obvious proof for Islam's violent foundations. This story may be a literary device rather than an actual event. Ibn al-Qayyim does not tell us whether the unbeliever was a Jew or a Christian, and he gives insufficient detail to place the event historically. However, it seems unlikely that Ibn al-Qayyim would have invented so unflattering a story had it not had some basis in reality. At the least, it reflects real attitudes and behaviors occurring within his fourteenth century milieu that he felt need to counteract.

Speaking of himself in the third person, Ibn al-Qayyim explains that in writing *Hidāya* he did not take the way of the "impotent and ignorant," that is, fighting. Rather he began in the proper way, inviting unbelievers to Islam and debating them. After that, and only after that, there is the sword for those who do not respond appropriately: "The sword came only to enforce the argument." Ibn Qayyim goes on to observe that his book answers the questions that he has received and marshals proofs for Muḥammad's prophethood. He ends his Introduction expressing satisfaction that his book has turned out well and noting a few of the book's highlights. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya makes readily apparent that his purpose in writing *Hidāya* is to provide the arguments needed to demonstrate the veracity of Islam to unbelievers so that Muslims do not need to resort to violence in the first instance. The text is here translated from the 2008 edition of Ḍumayriyya (pp. 20–23).¹⁶

One of the claims of God over His servant is refuting those who defame His Book, His Messenger and His religion and striving against them with proof and clear

¹⁵ Muḥammad al-Ḥājj, editor of the 1996 edition of *Hidāya*, sets the stage similarly although in more extravagant terms. He explains that Jews and Christians used to employ all manner of deceit to undermine Islam, whether combat, conspiracy or introduction of doubt. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya emerged to write *Hidāya* after Muslims had defeated the military threat posed by the Crusaders but had not yet erased the intellectual threat of doubt that the Crusaders also posed (p. 6). The first part of al-Ḥājj's argument concerning the deceit of Jews and Christians is translated in Birgit Krawietz, "Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah: His Life and Works," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 10.2 (2006): 19–64 (on p. 33). Also, Krawietz (p. 34) misreads al-Ḥājj (p. 595) to say that Ibn al-Qayyim's tone was not as harsh as Ibn Taymiyya's. Al-Ḥājj does not compare Ibn al-Qayyim with Ibn Taymiyya in this context. He simply notes Ibn al-Qayyim's preference for argument over violence (*unf*) in dealing with Jews and Christians.

¹⁶ All further page references to *Hidāya* are to Ḍumayriyya's 2008 edition and will be given in the text.

explanation, sword and spear, and heart and soul. Not even a mustard seed of faith is left beyond that.¹⁷

Questions came to our attention that one of the heretical unbelievers had set out before one of the Muslims. Nothing came to [the Muslim's] mind that would heal him. There was no remedy for the malady in him, but the Muslim thought that he could treat it by beating [the unbeliever]. So he pounced on him and beat him, and he said, "This is the answer!" So the unbeliever replied, "Our comrades spoke truthfully when they said that the religion of Islam was established only by the sword, not by the Book." Then they went their separate ways — the beater and the beaten — and the proof was lost between the seeker and the sought.

The respondent [i.e. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya himself] gathered up his strength and applied himself with diligence. He stood up for God, asking Him for help, entrusting [everything] to Him, and trusting in Him alone in accord with His good pleasure. He did not speak the words of the impotent and ignorant, "Unbelievers are dealt with only by fighting, not with debate." That is fleeing from the [battle] march and drifting into impotence and weakness. God commanded debating the unbelievers after calling them [to Islam], presenting argument and removing excuse "so that those who were to perish would perish after a clear proof and those who were to live would live after a clear proof" (Q. 8:42).

The sword came only to enforce the argument, to reform the obstinate and to limit the denier. "Indeed, We sent our Messengers with clear proofs and sent with them the Book and the Scales so that the people might act fairly. And We sent down iron in which is mighty power and benefits for people, that God might know who will support Him and His messengers in the unseen. Truly, God is strong and mighty" (Q. 57:25). The religion of Islam was established by the guiding Book, and the sharp sword enforced it.

What is there apart from the revelation or the sharpened edge,
Whose tip¹⁸ straightens the neck veins of every deviant?!

The one is the healing for the malady in every rational person;
The other is the remedy for the malady in every ignorant person.¹⁹

We turn to God desiring success. Indeed, He it is who opens its doors for good and who facilitates the means to it.

¹⁷ This passage alludes to two successive hadith reports in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 70–71, Al-Īmān, Bayān kawān al-nahy 'an al-munkar min al-īmān. . . . The first reads, "Whoever among you sees wrong, let him change it with his hand; if he is not able, then with his tongue; if he is not able, then with his heart. That is the weakest of faith." The second reads similarly, ending in "Not even a mustard seed of faith is left beyond that," which Ibn al-Qayyim here quotes. Ibn al-Qayyim reverses the order of hand and tongue to tongue and hand, thereby giving precedence to verbal explanation over physical force. Hadith numbers are those given at www.al-islam.com.

¹⁸ Reading *zubbāhu* instead of *ḍubbāhu*.

¹⁹ These lines appear in slightly different wording toward the end of a panegyric by Abū Tammām (d. 845 or 846) for the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Mu'taṣim. See *Dīwān Abī Tammām* (Beirut: Maṭba'at al-Qiddīs Jāwrijjyūs, 1887), 219–221 (on p. 221); also in Muḥammad 'Abduh 'Azzām ed., *Dīwān Abī Tammām bi-sharḥ al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrizī*, 3 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-ma'ārif, 1964), 3:79–87 (on pp. 86–87).

I wrote this book and called it *Guidance for the Confused concerning Answers to Jews and Christians*, and I divided it into two parts. The first part deals with answers to questions. The second part deals with establishing the prophethood of Muḥammad — May God bless him and give him peace — with all manner of proof. By God’s praise, benevolence and granting of success, it has become an enjoyable and appealing book; its reader will not grow tired nor will the eye examining it grow weary. It is a book of benefit for this world and the hereafter, and for increasing faith and human pleasure. It will give you what you desire: the signs of prophethood, the proofs of the message, the glad tidings of the prophets concerning their Seal, the location of his name plainly stated in their books, the mention of his qualities, manner and conduct in their books, the distinction between genuine religions and the corrupt among them — as well as how they were corrupted after having been sound — all the scandals of the People of the two Books and what they adhere to — that they have practically nothing in common with their prophets and that the texts of their prophets testify to their unbelief and error — and other wonderful subtleties not found elsewhere. It is God who is asked for help and trusted in. He is sufficient for us. How excellent is He in whom we trust.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya refutes the allegation that Islam is based on violence very early in the body of *Hidāya* (pp. 29–30). He argues that the Prophet Muḥammad did not fight those who made peace with him and paid the *jizya* head tax. Moreover and in accord with the Qur’ānic assertion, “There is no compulsion in religion” (Q. 2:256), the Prophet never forced anyone to convert to Islam. The Prophet fought only those who took up arms against him. Ibn al-Qayyim acknowledges that some medieval Muslim jurists held that polytheists and idol worshippers had no choice but to convert to Islam or be fought; the option of paying *jizya* was not open to them. However, Ibn al-Qayyim himself appears to favor accepting the *jizya* from all unbelievers, no matter what their conviction and practice.²⁰

Ibn al-Qayyim’s defense here does not fit easily with his assertion in the Introduction that the sword comes to bear upon those who do not respond to argument and remain obstinately in their unbelief. I have not found Ibn al-Qayyim trying to resolve this discrepancy. What is clear, however, is that his discourse presupposes a situation in which Muslims have the upper hand politically over the Jews and Christians in their midst. With that advantage in place, Ibn al-Qayyim does not want to give them excuses not to convert. Unwarranted violence makes a bad apology for Islam, and altercations such as a Muslim beating an unbeliever for lack of argument require the pastoral response of providing the argument. This is what compels Ibn al-Qayyim to write. It was probably also in Ibn al-Qayyim’s interest to alleviate violent impulses among ordinary people to help the Mamlūk rulers maintain public order, but *Hidāya* provides no explicit evidence of such motivation.

²⁰ For further discussion of this point, see Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 79–80.

The Inquiry Prompting Ibn al-Qayyim's Treatise

Ibn al-Qayyim divides the inquiry to which *Hidāya* responds into seven parts and responds to each in succession. I have gathered these seven parts into a single text translated below to provide a better sense of its unity and character. This text might be Ibn al-Qayyim's own literary creation based on questions that he picked up from older texts or exchanges with contemporary interlocutors. However, it is far more likely to be an authentic text brought to Ibn al-Qayyim for consideration, as he himself indicates. The inquiry does not suit his polemical and apologetic purposes adequately to be his own composition. While he always answers the questions posed in the inquiry, he says a great deal more as well. A case in point is Ibn al-Qayyim's discussion of violence noted above. This falls within his response to the first part of the inquiry and has little bearing on the question at hand. If the text were his own creation, he would surely have included the question about violence within it.

The first half of the inquiry challenges alleged Muslim beliefs about Jews and Christians. The inquirer first claims that Muslims think Jews and Christians refuse to convert to Islam for no reasons other than insolent attachment to positions of headship (*riyāsa*) and the allure of food and the good life (*ma'kala*). The inquirer does not challenge this alleged Muslim belief directly. Instead, he asks rhetorically why Jews and Christians who do not have access to headship and the good life remain in their unbelief. By implication, there must be something more noble keeping Jews and Christians from becoming Muslims than love of worldly power and pleasure.

The inquirer then cites a second belief alleged to be widespread among Muslims, namely, that Jews and Christians erased the Prophet Muḥammad's name from the Torah and the Gospel (*Injīl*). They did this so that they could continue to enjoy headship and the good life and not convert to Islam. The inquirer argues that this is very unlikely. Perhaps Jews and Christians might have denied a matter of such gravity verbally, but it is irrational to think that they could have colluded successfully to alter all the texts spread throughout the world. Moreover, the inquirer asks, if Muslims claim that Jewish and Christian converts to Islam reported seeing the Prophet's name in their books, why then have those converts not come forth with the evidence? The inquirer names two such converts. The first figure 'Abd Allāh b. Salām (d. 663–64) was known as the chief rabbi of the Jewish tribe of Banū Qaynuqā', which Muḥammad expelled from Medina in 624. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya relates several ḥadīth reports in *Hidāya* showing that Ibn Salām converted readily to Islam and was then rejected by his people (pp. 92–96).²¹ Ka'b al-Aḥbār (d. 652 or later) was a Jew from Yemen who converted to Islam around 638, and he was the source of much Jewish lore that found its way into the prophets' stories (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*) and Qur'ān *tafsīr* literature.²²

²¹ See also J. Horowitz, "'Abd Allāh b. Salām," EI2, 1:52. The new *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3d ed., does not contain an entry for 'Abd Allāh b. Salām.

²² M. Schmitz, "Ka'b al-Aḥbār, Abū Iṣḥāq b. Māti' b. Huysu'/Haynū'," EI2, 4:316–17.

Whereas the first half of the inquiry seeks simply to question disparaging Muslim views of Jews and Christians, the latter half goes on the offensive. The inquirer turns the tables on the first Muslim argument that Jews and Christians refuse to convert to Islam for love of headship and the good life, and he insinuates that it was instead Ibn Salām who converted to Islam for these same reasons. Ibn Salām found himself vastly outnumbered by Muslims, and so he conveniently switched sides. That bit of vengeful polemic aside, the inquirer demeans the Companions of the Prophet in order to undermine the Hadith, the foundation of the Islamic legal system. The inquirer argues that Muslims rely on hadith reports related by unlearned “commoners (*awāmm*) among the Companions [of the Prophet]” to derive their teachings on what is lawful and forbidden. In the view of the inquirer, it would have been more reasonable to have turned to the much more capable and scholarly ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām and his comrades. The inquiry ends with a frontal attack on the morality of Muslim scholars, accusing them of sexual perversion and corrupt character.

The last half of this inquiry is especially vicious, impugning as it does the foundation of the Islamic legal system, the Companions of the Prophet, and castigating Muslims scholars, the stewards of this system, for their decadence. No doubt the meanness of the inquiry contributed to the harshness of Ibn al-Qayyim’s response. The inquiry over all is clever but not theologically sophisticated. It might be readily dismissed as petty were it not for its success in upsetting uneducated Muslims. The fact that such small-minded questions induced tension across the religious divides in the eastern Mediterranean of the early fourteenth century reveals a significant level of open religious competition and concomitant insecurity. This is further confirmed by the obvious need that Ibn al-Qayyim felt to refute these questions in order to sure up the confidence and identity of simple Muslims.

The reconstructed inquiry is here translated in full. Ibn al-Qayyim’s numbers dividing the inquiry into seven parts are given first in brackets, followed by the page numbers on which the texts are found in *Hidāya*.

[1, p. 27] You [Muslims] commonly understand that nothing prevented the People of the Two Books from entering Islam except headship (*riyāsa*) and the good life (*ma’kala*), nothing else. [2, p. 55] Let us suppose that they chose unbelief on account of that. Then why did those without headship and the good life not follow the truth, either voluntarily or involuntarily? [3, p. 99] You [Muslims] commonly understand in the Book and the Sunna that [the name of] your prophet was written among [the People of the Two Books] in the Torah and the Injil, but that they erased it from the two of them out of [attachment to] headship and the good life. Now, the intellect considers that dubious. Would all of them have agreed to erase his name from the books revealed from their Lord, in the east, west, south and north? This is something that the intellect considers even more dubious than their denying it with their tongues. This is because going back on what they said with their tongues is possible, but going back on what they erased is more far-fetched. [4, p. 264] If you say, “‘Abd Allāh b. Salām, Ka’b al-Aḥbār and their like bore witness to that for us in their books,” then why did Ibn Salām and his comrades

who became Muslims not bring the copies that they had in order to be a witness against us?

[5, p. 269] You accuse the two great aforementioned nations of choosing unbelief over belief for the aforementioned purpose [of headship and the good life]. Now, that purpose applies all the more so to Ibn Salām and his comrades because they were very few in number, while those opposed to him were many beyond count. [6, p. 274] Doubt has entered our [minds] with respect to ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām and his comrades. This is because you built most of the basis of your regulations concerning the lawful and the forbidden and the command and the prohibition on hadith reports from the commoners (*‘awāmm*) among the Companions [of the Prophet] who had not inquired into knowledge, studied or written before the commissioning of your Prophet. The hadith reports and stories of Ibn Salām and his comrades were more worthy of acceptance because they were people of knowledge, inquiry, study and writing before the commissioning of your Prophet and afterwards. We do not see you drawing from them in matters of the lawful and the forbidden and the command and the prohibition except a very little bit. This is weak of you. [7, p. 300] We see in your religion more abominations among those who are the more knowledgeable and understanding in your religion, such as adultery, sodomy, treachery, envy, miserliness, perfidy, haughtiness, pride, conceit, lack of scrupulousness and conviction, lack of mercy, virtue and zeal, excessive impatience, greed for this world, and laziness in doing good deeds. This circumstance belies the tongue speaking.

A Sketch of Ibn al-Qayyim’s Response

The bulk of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya’s *Hidāya* is devoted to countering the inquirer’s questions and charges. This reply takes up 402 of the treatise’s 450 pages in the 2008 edition. Comprehensive examination of this response and the book’s final section on proofs for Muḥammad’s prophethood is beyond the scope of this article. Here I simply sketch the main contours of Ibn al-Qayyim’s response in order to corroborate his apologetic and pastoral aims. Note will also be made of some of his sources.

As mentioned above, Ibn al-Qayyim divides the inquiry into seven parts and treats each in succession. In his response to the first part (pp. 27–54), he rejects the inquirer’s assertion that Muslims think Jews and Christians remain in their religions for nothing more than love of headship and the good life. He admits that this might be the view of some Muslim commoners, but he maintains that it is not the view of the community as a whole. To make his point Ibn al-Qayyim cites other reasons for Jewish and Christian disbelief and illustrates them with examples. His reasons include ignorance, envy, pride, fear and a perverse fascination with the irrational, especially as evidenced in Christian doctrines and practices. However, Ibn al-Qayyim does not entertain the possibility that Jews and Christians genuinely believe their religions to be true. The inquirer’s allegation might be a gross generalization meant to malign Muslim interlocutors, but it may just as well express exasperation that Muslims of that time seemed unable to imagine Christians and Jews remaining in their religions for any reason other than human sinfulness. Ibn

al-Qayyim does not transcend this discourse, and doing so may have unnerved his audience. Allowing that unbelievers might be sincere in adhering to their respective religions could perhaps introduce doubt in unlearned Muslims and undermine the apologetic aim of reinforcing their faith.

In the second part of his discussion (pp. 55–98), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya takes up the inquirer's question why Jews and Christians without access to headship and the good life remain in their religions. He responds that it is perfectly normal for such people to follow their leaders; there is nothing irrational about that. However, Ibn al-Qayyim also wants to make another point. In both this and the previous sections, he emphasizes through argument and illustration that the great majority of Jewish and Christian leaders and their followers did in fact enter Islam and that they all did so voluntarily. This is to reject the thought that Muḥammad might have employed force to convert people and to render the inquirer's argument of little demographic consequence. In other words, so many Jews and Christians freely converted to Islam that no explanation is ultimately required for those few who did not. There is also a pastoral element here that takes Ibn al-Qayyim well beyond merely answering the inquiry. In an effort to build up the confidence of Muslims in their own religion, Ibn al-Qayyim relates several stories from the early days of Islam of Jews and Christians recognizing the truth and converting voluntarily.

The third part of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's response in *Hidāya* provides a veritable encyclopedia of stories, arguments and texts demonstrating the prophethood of Muḥammad (pp. 99–263). Among them is the claim that the Jewish and Christian scriptures point to the Prophet Muḥammad and even name him explicitly. So far as the inquirer knew, Muslims contended that Jews and Christians had erased Muḥammad's name from their books. Ibn al-Qayyim counters that no Muslim scholar makes this allegation even if some Muslim commoners may say this in their ignorance. Ibn al-Qayyim then cites indications of Muḥammad in texts such as Deuteronomy 18:15 and 33:2, John 14:10–13, 24–37, and Isaiah 42:1–7, and he finds the Prophet's name Muḥammad mentioned explicitly in Habakkuk 3:3 and 3:9 (pp. 187–89). In proving the prophethood of Muḥammad from biblical texts, Ibn al-Qayyim here follows early apologists 'Alī b. Rabbanal-Ṭabarī (d. c. 860) and Ibn Qutayba (d. 889),²³ and he draws extensively upon Ibn Taymiyya's catalog of these arguments found in *Takhjīl abl al-Injīl*.

²³ 'Alī al-Ṭabarī likewise discerns two explicit mentions of Muḥammad's name in Habakkuk 3:3 and 3:9. See 'Alī Ṭabarī, *The Book of Religion and Empire: A Semi-official Defence and Exposition of Islam Written by Order at the Court and with the Assistance of the Caliph Mutawakkil (A.D. 847–861)*, trans. A. Mingana (Manchester, UK: The University Press, 1922), 119. Hebrew Bible quotations found in both 'Alī al-Ṭabarī and Ibn al-Qayyim's *Hidāya* are tabulated in Franz Taeschner, "Die alttestamentlichen Bibelzitate, vor allem aus dem Pentateuch, in al-Ṭabarī's Kitāb ad-Dīn wad-Da'wa und ihre Bedeutung für die Frage nach der Echtheit dieser Schrift," *Oriens Christianus* Series 3, vol. 9 (1934), 23–38 (on pp. 25–33). On Ibn Qutayba see Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 30–36, 267–77. Quotations from the four Gospels found in *Hidāya* are tabulated in Martin Accad, "The Gospels in the Muslim Discourse of the Ninth to the Fourteenth Centuries: An Exegetical Inventorial Table," four parts, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 14.1–4 (2003), 67–91, 205–20, 337–52, 459–79.

Ibn Taymiyya's *Takhjil* was appended to his *Jawāb* at an early date and is printed and frequently cited as part of *Jawāb*. This probably contributed to earlier scholars such as Fritsch and Anawati accusing Ibn al-Qayyim of heavily plagiarizing *Jawāb*.²⁴

It is also in the third part of *Hidāya* that Ibn Ḥazm's influence may be detected in Ibn al-Qayyim's assertion of textual corruption in the Torah and the four Gospels (pp. 241ff., cf. pp. 112–113).²⁵ Ibn al-Qayyim is well aware of the tension that Accad identified between proving Muḥammad's prophethood from the Bible and yet declaring that very text corrupt. He resolves this theologically by claiming that God prevented Jews and Christians from altering those particular passages that foretold the advent of Muḥammad; the rest of the text was subject to corruption (p. 242).

The fourth part of *Hidāya* (pp. 264–68) responds to the inquirer's claim that early Jewish converts to Islam 'Abd Allāh b. Salām and Ka'b al-Aḥbār did not produce evidence of Muḥammad's prophethood from their book. Ibn al-Qayyim retorts that Ibn Salām and Ka'b al-Aḥbār did in fact produce such evidence, but he also clarifies that believing in the Prophet does not depend on biblical evidence alone. There are other kinds of proof for Muḥammad's prophethood, and the truthfulness of his prophethood does not ultimately rest on it being foretold in previous scriptures.

In the fifth part of his discussion (pp. 269–73), Ibn al-Qayyim rejects the inquirer's allegation that the Jewish scholar Ibn Salām converted to Islam only to gain headship and the good life. Rather, Ibn Salām converted when Islam was still weak. He would not have converted had power and pleasure been his primary aims. Instead, Ibn Salām recognized the signs of Muḥammad's prophethood and followed the truth.

The sixth part of Ibn al-Qayyim's response (pp. 274–99) takes up the inquirer's argument that the Companions of the Prophet lacked adequate scholarly credentials and so formed an inadequate authority base for Islamic laws. Ibn al-Qayyim replies that the foundation of the Law (*sharī'a*) is not the credentials of the Companions, but the revelation of God. That said, he also counters that some Companions did have great knowledge.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's discourse to this point in *Hidāya* is largely defensive and apologetic. He is trying to undo the damage done by the inquirer's arguments to Muslims' confidence in their religion and demonstrate the truth of Islam. In the seventh and last part of his reply to the inquiry, however, he mounts a searing polemical attack (pp. 300–428). The inquirer ends his inquiry by impugning the morality and integrity of Muslim scholars. Ibn al-Qayyim retorts that God's messengers cannot be held accountable for the sins of their followers. Moreover, all communities suffer under sin, and Jews

²⁴ Ibn Taymiyya's *Takhjil abl al-Injil* begins at *Jawāb*, 5:146. On the identity and history of *Takhjil*, see Michel, *Response*, 370–382. Ibn al-Qayyim's discussion of Habakkuk in *Hidāya*, 187–189, closely follows Ibn Taymiyya's *Takhjil abl al-Injil*, published as Ibn Taymiyya, *Jawāb*, 5:267–271. Among this section's many other borrowings from Ibn Taymiyya's text are *Hidāya*, 155–157, copied from *Takhjil*, 5:199–203; and *Hidāya*, 160–62, copied from *Takhjil*, 5:223–25 (with variations).

²⁵ Ljamai, *Ibn Ḥazm*, 186–87.

and Christians, of all people, have no right to point their fingers at others. Ibn al-Qayyim then elaborates their errors, first those of the Jews and then of the Christians.

Ibn al-Qayyim's diatribe against the Jews underlines their bad deeds (pp. 302–319). He enumerates their sins against Moses and subsequent prophets and then elaborates how the rabbinic strand of Judaism capriciously places undue legal burdens on its followers merely to retain a grip on religious authority. Ibn al-Qayyim here copies extensively from the treatise *Ifḥām al-Yahūd* (Silencing of the Jews) by the Jewish convert to Islam al-Samaw'al al-Maghrabī (d. 1175).²⁶ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's polemic against Christians seeks to make a mockery of their doctrines (pp. 319–428). We are asked for example whether one should not be ashamed whose religion is based on belief that "the Lord of the heavens and the earth . . . entered the vulva of a woman who eats, drinks, urinates, defecates and menstruates" (p. 320). Ibn al-Qayyim also devotes considerable energy to showing that Jesus could not possibly have been divine.²⁷ Then, he quotes extensively from the tenth century Arab church historian Ibn Baṭrīq to narrate how Christians deviated and erred, beginning with Jesus' disciples and extending through a total of ten ecumenical councils. Ibn al-Qayyim may have had independent access to Ibn Baṭrīq's account, but it is just as likely that he drew this material from Ibn Taymiyya's *Jawāb* where it is also found.²⁸ The net effect of Ibn al-Qayyim's long analysis of Jewish and Christian error is to leave Muslim readers feeling vindicated that they are most certainly in the right religion.

At the end of *Hidāya* comes Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's proof for the prophethood of Muḥammad promised in his introduction (pp. 431–51). This section is unexpectedly brief and unsystematic. Ibn al-Qayyim may have felt little need to prolong this discussion since many proofs for Muḥammad's prophethood had been given in earlier sections. Among other things, this last section includes a harangue against Jewish error and the claim that believing in any prophet entails believing in Muḥammad because all prophets point to him.

²⁶ Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 53 n. 8; Moshe Perlmann, "Samau'al Al-Maghrabī: Ifḥām Al-Yahūd: Silencing the Jews," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 32 (1964): 5–104 (English), 1–136 (Arabic). Ibn al-Qayyim's polemic against the Jews is also studied and translated in Ignaz Goldziher, "Proben muhammedanischer Polemik gegen den Talmud, II: Ibn Kajjim al-Ġauzija," *Jeschurun* 9 (1873): 18–47, reprinted in Ignaz Goldziher, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Joseph Desomogyi, vol. 1 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1967), 229–258.

²⁷ This part of *Hidāya* includes an argument that Muḥammad's appearance verified the truthfulness of all preceding prophets (pp. 371–75), which Accad translates in "Muḥammad's Advent," 222–25. Also relevant to this section of *Hidāya* is the remark of Gabriel Said Reynolds, *A Muslim Theologian in the Sectarian Milieu: 'Abd al-Jabbār and the Critique of Christian Origins* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 77–79, that Ibn al-Qayyim quotes a few pages from 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Aḥmad al-Hamadhānī, *Tatbīb Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm 'Uthmān, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-'Arabiyya, 1966).

²⁸ On the complicated reception history of Ibn Baṭrīq's account and its use in Ibn Taymiyya's *Jawāb*, see Mark N. Swanson, "Ibn Taymiyya and the Kitāb Al-Burhān: A Muslim Controversialist Responds to a Ninth-Century Arabic Christian Apology," in *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Z. Haddad (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1995), 95–107.

Epilogue

It may not be possible to ascertain the extent to which Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's *Hidāya* met the apologetic and pastoral needs of his time, but the fact of eight different editions published since 1978 suggests that it is going some distance in meeting similar needs today. 'Uthmān Ḍumayriyya, editor of the 2008 edition of *Hidāya*, provides what is likely an important clue to present-day interest in the book.

Ḍumayriyya explains that Islam has long suffered under both military and intellectual threats. On the military side he invokes a litany of enemies and conflicts ranging from the Crusades and the Mongol invasions to modern European colonization, Communism, and recent conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, India, Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. At the intellectual level, Ḍumayriyya dismisses today's talk of tolerance, dialogue and co-existence as nothing more than a smokescreen leading to a weakening of Muslim faith and power and paving the way for secularists and Christian missionaries. Ḍumayriyya insists that Muslim scholars must rise to the occasion in order to articulate true Islam and refute the arguments of adversaries, and he sets forth Ibn al-Qayyim as an example of a scholar who fulfilled this obligation. In writing *Hidāya* Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya inspires Ḍumayriyya and no doubt other Muslims feeling a similar sense of embattlement to assert their identity firmly in a hostile and insecure world.²⁹ *Hidāya* may even be supplying arguments that inform these Muslims' faith, disconnected as those arguments sometimes are from what Jews and Christians actually believe.

In today's context Ibn Qayyim's preference for argument over the sword is welcome, and apologetics and polemics can offer a measure of support for vulnerable and unknowledgeable members of a community who might otherwise turn to violence. Yet, one must question the highly polemical model that Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya provides. Polemics, especially of the meaner kind, distort and obscure truth and ultimately ruin relations with people of other persuasions. A faith identity worth nurturing and sustaining is one that can live in truth and in relation with those who differ.

²⁹ Ḍumayriyya, ed., *Hidāya*, 6–10 (Introduction).