



The Contextual Origin of Ibn Taymiyyah's Thought on Jihad

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: February 25, 2023</p> <p>Revised: March 21, 2023</p> <p>Accepted: June 6, 2023</p> <p>Published: June 6, 2023</p> <p>Keyword: Ibn Taymiyyah; Jihad Fatwa; Jihadist; Radical; Moderate.</p> <p>Copyright (c) 2023 Hamdan Maghribi Maghribi, Abbas Shofwan, Alfina Hidayah</p> 	<p>Since the 1980s until today, Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) has been one of the most quoted medieval scholars by jihadists. From ‘Abd al-Salām Faraj (d. 1981) to Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda. Ibn Taymiyyah is frequently cited to justify their doctrine. Ibn Taymiyyah’s fatwa is used to declare a legitimate leader of a country an apostate for not fully implementing the shari’ah and obligating every Muslim to jihād against him, classifying war zones (dār al-ḥarb) and requiring emigration (hijrah) from them, and permitting suicide bombings in the name of jihād. This article examines jihadists’ understanding of jihād as well as Ibn Taymiyyah’s jihād fatwas, specifically the three anti-Mongol fatwas and the Mardin fatwa, which are frequently cited by jihadists. This article addresses two major issues: first, it discusses Ibn Taymiyyah’s three anti-Mongol fatwas, as well as their citation and interpretation in jihadist fatwas; second, it examines the Mardin fatwa, which is always used as justification for jihad against the legitimate government. The article finds that some of the radicalists’ jihād doctrines quote directly from Ibn Taymiyyah’s jihād fatwas, particularly the three anti-Mongol fatwas and the Mardin fatwa, but most of the fatwas cannot be associated with Ibn Taymiyyah when approached holistically. The article also notes that Ibn Taymiyyah's jihād doctrine is only partially quoted and ignores the majority of fatwas that are closely related to the theme of jihād, such as the concepts of hijrah and critical loyalty to the government. This article also identifies Ibn Taymiyyah’s jihād thoughts as being more frequently cited to legalize the interests of jihadist groups in justifying their acts of terror while ignoring the historical and political contexts that surround them.</p>
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Introduction

In the history of the Islamic intellectual tradition, Ibn Taimiyyah (d. 1328) is one of the most controversial medieval scholars (Hoover, 2020, p. 1). He has received more scholarly studies than any other scholar, more than twice as many as al-Ghazālī, who comes in second (Berkey, 2003, pp. 276–286; El-Rouayheb, n.d., p. 269). Some researchers questioned whether he was a salafi (Harās, 1952) or not (‘Awīs, 1970). Regardless of the response, he has been lauded as the “Father of the Islamic Revolution” (Sivan, 1983) and was named in The 9/11 Commission Report as the origin of a long history of Islamic extremism (Kean & Hamilton, 2004). Even now, many people read and use his writings as references for different things. Ibn Taimiyyah is regarded as a pioneer of *fiṭrah* philosophy by al-Barīdī (Al-Barīdī, 2021) and as a famous nominalist philosopher by Abū Ya’rib al-Marzūqī (Al-Marzūqī, 1996), even considered as a Sufi (Maghribi, 2022; Maghribi et al., 2022). Fazlur Raḥmān (d. 1988) a Pakistani intellectual and professor at the University of Chicago calls Ibn Taimiyyah a role model in his view of modernism (Rahman, 2000, p. 132; Riexinger, 2013, pp. 493–517).

A Muslim scholar from Qatar named Yūsuf al-Qarāḍawī (d. 2022) claimed that Ibn Taimiyyah was the source of inspiration for his idea of *wasatīyyah* (Graf & Skovgaard-Petersen, 2009, pp. 213–238). Al-Qarāḍawī justifies Ibn Taimiyyah’s advocacy for constructive political participation in pluralistic societies (M. Hassan, 2010, pp. 351–355), reasonable judgments that strike a balance between benefit and *maḍārat* (ḥarm) (March, 2009, pp. 253, 264), and a fight against unbelievers that is highly defensive in nature (Zaman, 2012, pp. 265–266, 304–305). In addition, Wahhābī groups in Saudi Arabia (Mandaville, 2022), religious reform movements in the 19th and early 20th centuries in Iraq (Weismann, 2009, pp. 49–97), Syria (Commins, 1990; Weismann, 2000), Yemen (Haykel, 2003), India (Nizami, 1990; Preckel, n.d.), and Egypt (Adams, 1968, pp. 202–204; Nasīrah, 2015), and the current global Salafi phenomenon that started in Saudi Arabia in the 1960s all refer to Ibn Taimiyyah for inspiration and legitimizing authority (Hidayah & Maghribi, 2022; Maihula, 2021, pp. 7–9; Meijer, 2013; Wehrey & Boukhars, 2019; Weismann, 2021, pp. 22–37; Wiktorowicz, 2005).

Ibn Taimiyyah’s fatwas are frequently cited by jihadists, which has prompted scholars, academics, the media, politicians, and the general public to look into this connection. For instance, only Ibn Taimiyyah was cited in an article in the Guardian newspaper that attempted to understand one of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) jihadist factions (H. Hassan, 2015). Researchers could look to Ibn Taimiyyah, who believed that the threat posed by Mongol invasions was so great that jihad had become a responsibility and enemies could be thought of as apostates (Patric, 2016) in another article from the same newspaper in 2016 that attempted to investigate the intellectual ideology of jihadists.

Mufti Jād al-Haqq and Simon Wolfgang Fuchs were among the scholars and academics. Jād al-Haqq examined ‘Abd Salām Faraj’s (d. 1981) treatise *al-Farīḍa al-*

ghā'ibah (Jād al-Haqq, 1997), Jād al-Haqq rejected the main ideas of the jihadi fatwa as incompatible with Islamic Shari'ah. Fuch examines the views of *al-'Umdah fi I'dād al-'Umdah li al-Jihād fi Sabīl Allāh*, a jihadist publication that guided al-Qaida in the 1980s (Fuchs, 2013). Fuchs explains how *al-'Umdah* used Quranic verses, hadiths, and statements by several Muslim scholars, including Ibn Taimiyyah, to support his terrorist arguments. Both Jād al-Haqq and Fuch have provided accurate analyses; however, their studies are still limited to one jihadist document each and do not emphasize Ibn Taimiyyah's jihadi arguments. There is also Yahya Michot who emphasizes the use of Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwas by jihadists.

Michot discusses how jihadists use the Mardin fatwa in their jihad fatwas in his book "Muslims Under Non-Muslim Rule" (Michot, 2006). Michot discusses the use of the Mardin fatwa to justify religiously motivated violence. Michot then cites three passages from the works of Ibn Taimiyyah that refute this justification. Michot quotes several passages from Ibn Taimiyyah's works in his other book, "Ibn Taimiyyah Against Extremism," (Michot, 2012) which show that Ibn Taimiyyah actually condemned and disassociated himself from extremism. Jād al-Haqq, Fuch, and Michot's works conclude that jihadists have used Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa to justify terror propaganda by quoting it out of context.

As a result, the main issues raised in this article are: to what extent is the use of Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwas justified by jihadists, which parts of Ibn Taimiyyah's works are used by jihadists, how and why? This article attempts to answer these questions by studying some of Ibn Taimiyyah's works as well as some works by contemporary jihadists. The article will expand on Ibn Taimiyyah's understanding of jihad by looking at the historical context of two of his fatwas, the anti-Mongol fatwa, and the Mardin Fatwa.

Research Method

This article studies the relationship between Ibn Taimiyyah's concept of jihad and how it is appropriated by the contemporary jihadist. It divided into two parts; part one studies selected works of Ibn Taimiyyah on jihad and part two studies selected works of the jihadists to point out how Ibn Taimiyyah's concept of jihad is associated by the jihadists. Using literature data and comparative and historical approach which is strengthened by a sociological-anthropological review, this article argues that while some contemporary jihadist doctrine could be justified from Ibn Taimiyyah's concept of jihad, most of the doctrines cannot be justified from Ibn Taimiyyah. Carried out using an interpretive approach and content analysis to capture Ibn Taimiyyah's concept of jihad, this article identifies that the jihadist doctrines can be justified from Ibn Taimiyyah but most of the fatwa could not be associated to Ibn Taimiyyah.

Result and Discussion

Anti-Mongol Fatwa: An Attempt to “Mongolize” the Authoritative Government

The historical context of the anti-Mongol fatwa was the Mongol threat to Mamlūk rule in Syria and Egypt. The Mongol military invasion from Central Asia had penetrated deep into the heart of the Muslim intellectual tradition; Baghdad was conquered by the Mongols in 1258, but the Mamlūks managed to contain their invasion of western Syria in 1260. Nevertheless, the Mongols still posed a major threat until the early 1300s. Ilkhanīd Ghazān (r. 1295-1304) converted to Sunni Islam, defeated the Mamlūk army, and occupied Damascus for three months. The Mongol army left the city after rumors spread that Mamlūk forces were approaching from the direction of Egypt (Aigle, 2014).

Ibn Taimiyyah did not fight against the Mongol occupation at the time but instead engaged in diplomacy to free the prisoners of war and prevent further bloodshed. Ghazān canceled his mission to attack the city for unknown reasons. Ghazān attempted a third invasion of Syria two years later, in 1303, but was stopped and repulsed by the Mamlūk army before reaching Damascus. Ghazān’s successor, Uljayt (d. 1317), a Shī’ah adherent, tried to invade Syria again in 1312 but failed (Aigle, 2007; Amitai, 2004, pp. 21–39; Michot, 1995, pp. 35–62).

The Mongol army’s conversion to Islam raises questions and doubts, as does their superiority over their predecessors. The Muslim community was in a bind because Islam forbids Muslims from killing (fighting) one another. This was the main point raised by Ibn Taimiyyah in three anti-Mongol fatwas that are constantly reprinted in his fatwa collection, *Majmū’ Fatāwā* (volume 28) (Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, vol. 28). His third fatwa, in chronological order, is the first of three anti-Mongol fatwas (1299-1300) (Aigle, 2007, p. 117). The first fatwa came after the second and third Mongol invasions in 1300 and 1303 (Aigle, 2007, p. 117). The first fatwa is the shortest one, contains seven pages. While the second is the longest, thirty-four pages, and the third is ten pages, while the letter is approximately forty-three pages.

These two fatwas state that despite their declaration of Islam, the Tatār (Mongols) must be fought and battled. The Mongols were not only considered *bughāt* (rebels) who emerged in the midst of the official government, such as Mu’wiyah, who fought against the official government of ‘Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib at the battle of Ṣiffīn in 657, but they had also broken many sharia laws, such as the prohibition of *zakāh* during the caliphate of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (634). According to Ibn Taimiyyah, the Mongols failed to fully implement Islamic Sharia and continued to practice idolatry. They are allies of polytheists, Christians, and idolaters; they do not fight in the name of Islam, but rather use their ‘Islamicness’ to gain hegemony over Muslim society. As a result, Ibn Taimiyyah saw Muslims as obligated to fight and wage jihad against them.

The Khawārij and those who refused to pay *zakāh* during the time of Abū Bakr in alliance with Mu’āwiyah who revolted against ‘Alī’s legitimate caliphate at the battle of Ṣiffīn were classified as the rebels (*bughāt*) by the Fuqahā’. They were still considered

believers and Muslims. Ibn Taimiyyah, on the other hand, divided these rebels into those who defied Islamic law, such as 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah, and those who did not, such as the Khawārij and those who refused to pay *zakāh* during the time of Abū Bakr. Whereas Mu'āwiyah was merely a political rebel, the Khawārij and the *zakāh*-refusers were considered *zindīq* (heretics). As a result, they had to be fought until they fully followed Islamic law (Abou Fadl, 2001, pp. 271–279; Aigle, 2007, pp. 101–102).

The second anti-Mongol fatwa is the most longest of the three. It restates the first and third arguments for fighting the Mongols because of their Khawārij-like status (Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, vols. 28: 509-43). Ibn Taimiyyah later stated in this fatwa that the Mongols practiced Islam corruptly and condemned them for converting to the Shī'ah school (Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, vol. 28: 527). This had something to do with Uljaytu's Shi'ism and desire to invade Syria in 1312 (Aigle, 2007, pp. 117–120; Schallenbergh, 2007, pp. 335–353).

Despite the fact that the Mongols had accepted Islam, Ibn Taimiyyah condemned syncretism and the pluralistic theology they still practiced in his second fatwa. Only a small number of them fasted and prayed, while the vast majority abandoned it and embraced heresy and *bid'ah*. He added that the Mongols still followed the *yāsa* law (Aigle, 2015; Morgan, 2005). Genghis Khan's legal system, which they regarded as equal to God as the Christian depiction of Jesus. Furthermore, Ibn Taimiyyah suspected that the Mongols initially adhered to the Sunni school of thought, but their switch to the Shī'ah school of thought was a political scandal, as the Shī'ah rulers of the time, who were in coalition with the Christians, facilitated the Mongols' conquest of the Muslim centers of power. He concludes that the Mongols' affiliation with the Shī'ah and the persistence of Genghis Khan's system of government, *yāsa*, is a form of apostasy (*murtaddūn*) even worse than the status of the *zakāh* rejecters from the time of Abū Bakr (Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, vols. 28: 520-31).

Anti-Mongol Fatwa in Modern Interpretation

'Abd al-Salām Faraj's book *al-Farīdah al-Ghā'ibah*, which provides the rationale for the assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat in 1981, includes extensive quotations from Ibn Taimiyyah's second and third anti-Mongol fatwas, as well as several commentaries on Q.S. 5:50 by Ibn Taimiyyah's student Ibn Kaṣīr (d. 1373), to explain that the Muslim leaders of the time had apostatized and should be fought and replaced by an Islamic state. *Farīdah* compared the Muslim leaders of the time to the Mongols, claiming that they were similar to the Khawārij and *zakāh* rejecters of Abū Bakr's time. Both the Muslim leaders of the time and the Mongols embraced Islam, but they were not considered apostates because they ruled under an unIslamic system. The Muslim leaders of the time adopted the laws of the kāfir Western invaders, and in fact, were worse than the Mongols who practiced the *yāsa* laws, and the Mongols were worse than the Khawārij and the *zakāh* rejecters. As a result, *al-Farīdah* reasoned, it was an obligation for every Muslim to fight the Muslim leaders of the time, just as it was an obligation to fight

the Khawārij and the Mongols (Jansen, 1986, pp. 171–173; Sivan, 1983, pp. 41–50). This is the justification for the Islamic revolution in contemporary jihadist thought (Wagemakers, 2012, pp. 59–74).

Following Sadat's assassination, Egyptian religious leaders used Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa to demonstrate that *al-Farīdah* was incorrect in comparing Muslim leaders to Mongols. In 1982, Egyptian Mufti Jād al-Ḥaqq (d. 1996) argued that Muslim leaders should not be compared to the cruel and irreligious Mongol armies. Jād al-Ḥaqq also forbade Muslims from calling fellow Muslims apostates, rejected the Quranic interpretations and fiqh arguments advanced in *al-Farīdah* on jihad, and urged Muslim scholars to oppose Faraj and his fatwas (M. Hassan, 2010, p. 359; Jād al-Ḥaqq, 1997).

Following Faraj's outright rejection, Jihadists sought to avoid *al-Farīdah* by broadening the authority base of classical scholars beyond the figure of Ibn Taimiyyah. Dr. Faḍl published *al-'Umdah*, a jihad manual that became popular among al-Qaeda members, in 1988. Although Ibn Taimiyyah is the most frequently cited figure in the book, other Muslim scholarly authorities such as al-Māwardī (d. 1058), al-Nawawī (d. 1277), and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī are also mentioned (d. 1449). According to Dr. Faḍl, the Muslim leaders of the time were astray as the Mongols. But he makes this point without mentioning Ibn Taimiyyah and without relying on anti-Mongol fatwas like Faraj in *al-Farīdah*. Dr. Faḍl only cites the first anti-Mongol fatwa that Faraj does not cite, in which Ibn Taimiyyah discusses and weighs the pros and cons of jihad against the Mongols. Even if jihadists do not have pure intentions, it is mandatory to fight to protect the religion if not fighting would cause greater harm (Dr. Fadl, 2009; Fuchs, 2013, pp. 203–204, 217–219, 233, 237; Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, vols. 28: 506-8).

In 1996, Osama bin Laden (d. 2011), the former leader of al-Qaeda, declared jihad against the United States and its allies, citing Ibn Taimiyyah and his utilitarian views. According to Bin Laden, when faced with two potential dangers, a Muslim should choose the lesser of the two, and it is better to fight against religious enemies than not to fight at all (Gwynne, 2006, pp. 61–90). The same logic is applied in the opposite context. In his book *Fiqh al-Jihād*, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī briefly mentions Ibn Taimiyyah's anti-Mongol fatwa and book *al-Farīdah al-Ghā'ibah* when explaining the ruling against *zālim* rulers. In his book *Against the Extremists*, al-Qaraḍāwī asserts that fighting those who violate religion is the legitimate ruler's prerogative, not the people's, in order to prevent the emergence of anarchy (Al-Qaraḍāwī, n.d., vol. 2: 1032).

Al-Qaraḍāwī also employs the traditional legal bias against social and political stability. He claims that it is not permissible to correct an injustice by causing another. Before being 'forced' to fight against injustice, Al-Qaraḍāwī stipulates four conditions: *first*, the scholars must agree that the injustice is real; *second*, the wrong must be open and not hidden (*syubhāt*); *third*, there must be sufficient power to correct the wrong; and *fourth*, correcting the wrong by force must not result in the birth of a greater wrong. According to him, the Jihadist agenda does not meet these four criteria (Al-Qaraḍāwī, n.d., vols. 2: 1040-51). According to al-Qaraḍāwī, patience is preferable when dealing

with authoritarian and despotic leaders because history shows that any form of rebellion never succeeds and instead results in bloodshed and chaos (Al-Qaraḍāwī, n.d., vols. 2: 1054-5). Michot, on the other hand, emphasizes philological, historical, and theological aspects over fiqh aspects, despite having the same vision of prudence and pragmatics as al-Qaraḍāwī.

Yahya Michot has been translating and commenting on Ibn Taimiyyah's works since 1990, and he has been actively researching the controversial figure of Ibn Taimiyyah since that time. It is no surprise that Michot is regarded as one of the contemporary Western researchers who has discussed Ibn Taymiyah the most. Michot approaches his research from a philological and historical standpoint. This philological-historical approach pervades some of his major works on Ibn Taimiyyah. Michot's works on Ibn Taimiyyah frequently begin with direct translations of Ibn Taimiyyah's texts, which he then supplements with philological, historical, and theological analyses in each of his footnotes. Michot's style emphasizes the tolerant and pragmatic aspects of Ibn Taimiyyah's ethics and spirituality. He has published over twenty-five books and scholarly articles on Ibn Taimiyyah, as well as three series of short collections of Ibn Taimiyyah's works. Sixteen of these are Michot's short translations, which were later translated into English as "Against Extremisms" in 2012 (Michot & Ibn Taimiyyah, 2012) and into Arabic as "*Ibn Taimiyyah ḍidda al-Taṭarruf*" in 2017 (Ibn Taimiyyah & Michot, 2017).

Michot's primary concern in his analysis appears to be the challenge posed by Ibn Taimiyyah's anti-Mongol fatwa when the text was seized by 'Abd al-Salām Faraj. He claims that Ibn Taimiyyah's work has become the domain of extremists like Faraj. His fatwas frequently suffer from a blurring of their essential context, reducing them to their true meaning. Maintaining relevance at a time when Islam is confronted with neo-jahiliyyah will have far-reaching consequences, far worse than the Mongol expansion against which Ibn Taimiyyah fought. Michot adds that if Muslims today face a greater threat of neo-jahiliyyah (extremism) than Ibn Taimiyyah faced when the Mongols invaded Syria, Ibn Taimiyyah's name will be dragged into the vortex of Islamic radicalism. Michot then translated Ibn Taimiyyah's texts directly, wishing for his readers to read Ibn Taimiyyah directly in order to understand him correctly, rather than through jihadists. Michot observes that Faraj's *al-Farīdah* cited Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa to justify his radical action in the assassination of Anwar Sadat. Michot also mentions Ali Belhadj, who used these texts in 1992 to call for an uprising against the Algerian government. According to him, both Faraj and Belhadj had monopolized anti-Mongol fatwas in an attempt to overthrow the official government. They twisted Ibn Taimiyyah's call to resist foreign colonialism into a call to overthrow the official government. He goes on to say that Ibn Taimiyyah's text has been interpreted in ways that contradict its original intent. On the one hand, the Mongols were no longer in a Muslim country for the radicals; they were in their hearts, and Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa justified fighting them. On the other hand, Ibn Taimiyyah's text provides no basis for such contention. They are unable to

comprehend Ibn Taimiyyah's text because they are not immersed in Ibn Taimiyyah's spiritual depths (Michot, 2020).

Michot argues clearly in "Muslims under Non-Muslim Rule" (Michot, 2006) that the 'mongolization' of Muslim governments is a betrayal of Ibn Taimiyyah's texts and thoughts (Michot, 2006, p. 49). This is clear from Ibn Taimiyyah's political stance towards the official Mamlūk government of the time, which chose to remain silent and advocated patience in the face of their tyranny, whereas Ibn Taimiyyah advocated complete obedience to the official government. Ibn Taimiyyah's critical obedience and nonviolence were inspired by the Prophets' example or by pragmatic morality, always choosing the lesser of two evils, *al akhzu bi akhaffi al-dararain*. Rebellion has more negative consequences than critical compliance with the official government. The radicals' and Western academics' attitude towards Ibn Taimiyyah, is as if they are "deliberately" following the radicals' reading to assert that Islam is an enemy of peace and tranquillity, and thus incompatible with modern Western values (Michot, 2006, pp. 123–129).

Mardīn's Fatwa and Revolution Justification

The Mardin fatwa, like the anti-Mongol fatwa, is attributed to the Mongols, but it is less harsh than the previous fatwa. In the Mardin fatwa, Ibn Taimiyyah was asked not about the Mongols, but about the status of Mardin's Muslim population under Mongol rule. This fatwa is frequently quoted and misrepresented by jihadists and Western scholars as one of Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwas. The essence of the Mardin fatwa was an answer to the question of *Dār al-Ḥarb* and *Dār al-Salām* which did not exist in Mardin. At the time, Ibn Taimiyyah responded that the region could not be considered *dār al-Silm* simply because the soldiers were Muslims, nor could it be considered *dār al-Ḥarb* because the inhabitants were disbelievers. Rather, it falls under the third category of ensuring Muslims' rights and combating those who violate Islamic law. As a result, this fatwa cannot be used to justify fighting Muslims or kāfirs or to justify rebellion against the legitimate ruler. It also cannot be used to legitimize the blood and property of those who coexist peacefully with Muslims (Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, pp. 28: 240-1; Michot, 2006, pp. 63–65).

The date of the Mardin fatwa is unknown, but the city of Mardin, which is now located in southeastern Turkey, was under Ilkhānid Mongol rule at the time (Hoover, 2016, p. 186). Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa addressed the city's and its Muslim inhabitants' legal status; was Mardin a *dār al-Ḥarb*, and did a Muslim have an obligation to migrate from it to *dār al-Silm*? Ibn Taimiyyah responded that migration was not required if Muslims could continue to practice their religion and that Mardin was neither a war zone nor an Islamic zone, but rather had a mixed status (*murakkabah*) of the two. Ibn Taimiyyah went on to define a war zone as one with a disbelieving population and a peace zone as one where Islamic law was enforced because the army was made up of Muslims (Maihula, 2021, pp. 76–82). Jihadists later used this fatwa to justify two arguments: labeling Muslim countries as war domains (*dār al-Ḥarb*) and then requiring

migration (*hijrah*) from war domains to peace/Islam domains (*dār al-salām*) (Michot, 2006).

Ibn Taimiyyah advocated jihad against the Mongols, comparing them to the Khawārij and *zakāh* refusers. In his first and third anti-Mongol fatwas, he enjoined jihad against them before declaring them apostates in his second fatwa. This could have opened the door for jihadists to use fatwas to judge Muslim rulers. Unlike the anti-Mongol fatwas, the Mardin fatwa did not devote much time to discussing the Mongols' status. The Mardin fatwa does not imply violence; rather, it creates a new concept of a third region that did not previously exist. This concept can be interpreted as Ibn Taimiyyah's attempt to reduce hostility and dispel the notion that the Muslims of Mardin was living within Islamic territory or were at war. The majority of scholars both before and after Ibn Taimiyyah defined the third domain as a domain of war (Maihula, 2021).

Faraj and other jihadists, such as 'Abd Allāh 'Azzām (d. 1989), equate the Islamic institution of Ibn Taimiyyah's Mardin fatwa as the 'domain of peace' with the Islamic government and modern institutions. In this case, the 'domain of peace' is where Islamic law, understood as a legal system enforced by the state, is applied. In contrast, despite having a Muslim majority, the 'domain of war' is a place where the Islamic legal system is not applied. This interpretation was later used to justify the war domain against Egypt which was led by President Anwar Sadat. Indeed, according to Ibn Taimiyyah, the absence of Muslims determines the actual domain of war (Jansen, 1986, pp. 158–159, 169–170; Michot, 2006, pp. 38–45). Faraj's reading is a form of fatwa politicization. When reading the text of the Mardin fatwa, the intertextual method should be used, enriching understanding of the Mardin fatwa by translating other texts of Ibn Taimiyyah related to hijrah.

Thus, true hijrah is staying away from sin, not simply leaving a location. Ibn Taimiyyah also mentioned two types of hijrah: away from sin and bad socialization and staying away from evildoers in order to punish them. Ibn Taimiyyah gave a wise fatwa on hijrah in both cases. Hijrah is only performed when the evil outweighs the good. For example, one should not turn away from sinners in order to punish them more severely than the sin they have committed. Similarly, away from sinners in order to avoid their evil risks foregoing any good that might come from them. He asserts this by quoting Ibn Ḥanbal's (d. 855) statement that there is nothing strong enough to counter the Qadariyyah school (Michot, 2006, pp. 11–17, 66–100). It is possible to conclude from Ibn Taimiyyah's text on hijrah that, *first* and foremost, Ibn Taimiyyah does not provide a definitive answer for Muslims living in Western countries today regarding whether they should relocate to a country that is more supportive of their Islamic identity. Rather, Muslims should weigh the benefits and drawbacks of their situation. *Second*, Ibn Taimiyyah's approach to hijrah is ethical rather than political; no mention of Islamic governance is made. *Third*, because of his utilitarianism in moral and religious matters,

Ibn Taimiyyah was a ‘moderate theologian,’ avoiding the risk of excessive intolerance (Michot, 2006, pp. 17–20).

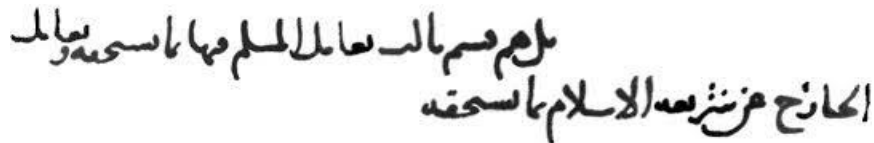
Taking into account this moderate and utilitarian hijrah doctrine, Ibn Taimiyyah presented the third term *murakkabah* alongside the terms ‘area of peace’ and ‘area of war’ in the Mardin fatwa. According to Ibn Taimiyyah, the quality of the people who live in a place determines its status. The presence of believers and non-believers determines whether or not a location is a war zone. If the Muslims in the area are allowed to practice their religion and beliefs freely, the area will be considered peaceful. This approach is more akin to an ethical approach than a narrow political approach (Michot, 2006, pp. 20–23). Mardin, then, is a complex domain for Ibn Taimiyyah (*murakkabah*). In contrast to the radical interpretation, Faraj and others like him believe that the mention of Islamic institutions refers to the Islamic system of government and the legal system of the state. The legal status of a location determines its status, not the ethical conditions of its inhabitants. By using the term Islamic institutions, Ibn Taimiyyah did not intend to prescribe an Islamic form of government, but rather personal matters such as marriage, inheritance, funeral arrangements, property protection, security, and other similar matters that are dependent on the conduct of each Muslim community. Even under a non-Muslim government, a domain where Muslims have the ability to practice these ‘institutions’ is not a domain of war (Michot, 2006, pp. 19–20, 2, 23, 25). Ibn Taimiyyah’s main concern here is the welfare and development of the Muslim community, not Muslim territorial dominance and the application of Islamic law. Ibn Taimiyyah’s thought was primarily juridical-religious, with a humanitarian orientation (Michot, 2006, p. 26).

Ibn Taimiyyah’s definition of the domain of peace complicates the understanding of his text even further. A peaceful domain is one in which Islamic institutions are used as well as soldiers who are Muslims (Michot, 2006, pp. 23, 59–61). Ibn Taimiyyah explains what it means for Mardin to be a hybrid between a domain of peace and a domain of war at the end of the fatwa on Mardin. Following the text in the *Majmū’ Fatāwā*, this third type of domain is where a Muslim is treated (*yu’āmal*) as he should be, and where one who deviates from Allah’s path is fought (*yuqātal*) as he deserves (Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, vols. 28: 240-1; Michot, 2006, p. 65). This demonstrates Ibn Taimiyyah’s personalist rather than political approach to Mardin’s status. The emphasis is no longer on the city’s overall status, but rather on the individuals within it, who should be treated fairly (Michot, 2006, pp. 26–27).

***Yuqātal* or *Yu’āmal*?**

On March 27-8, 2010, an international conference called “Mardīn Dār al-Salām” (Mardin the City of Peace) was held to discuss Ibn Taimiyyah’s Mardin fatwa (Michot, 2011). The conference was organized by prominent Mauritanian Sufi ‘Abd Allāh bin Bayyah and Aftab Malik, a UK-based writer. The conference was held to discuss the status of the Mardin fatwa, which is frequently misunderstood, particularly by radicals,

and it was revealed at this conference that there was a distortion of words from the original manuscript. That the word *yuqātal* (fought) in the last line is actually *yu'āmal* (treated) (see image), defining a third type of domain in which a Muslim is treated accordingly, and the deviant is also treated accordingly, rather than fought. Although Michot harshly criticized the conference as "just another" image-making exercise to polish Islam in the eyes of the West, as well as further nourishing the disease of extremism in the Muslim world, he appreciated the fact that the Mardin fatwa manuscript had been tampered with (Michot, 2011).



The image shows two lines of handwritten Arabic script. The top line reads 'لهم قسم بالرب العالمين اللهم فيها ما سجدت له' and the bottom line reads 'الحارث بن تميم بن عبد الله بن أسد بن عبد شمس بن عبد مناف بن قصي بن كلاب بن مرة بن كعب بن لؤي بن غالب بن فهر بن مالك بن النضر بن كنانة بن خزيمة بن مدركة بن إلياس بن مضر بن نزار بن معد بن عدنان'. The text is written in a cursive style with some corrections and additions.

Last sentence of the Mardin Fatwa, MS. Damascus, Zāhiriyyah 2757, f. 192r.

Ibn Taimiyyah's moderate stance and ethical personalism on the argument in the anti-Mongol fatwa that those who abandoned some aspects of Islam should be fought, in the calculation of the Prophets' history, the rebellion would cause more harm than good. That is why Ibn Taimiyyah was gentle and patient with the Mamluks, the Muslim rulers of the time. As a result, extremists have no right to use Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa to carry out armed rebellion against their own government. Ibn Taimiyyah's anti-Mongol fatwa arose in the context of Mamlūk war propaganda, which was closely related to the period in which it was written. However, the contrast between his anti-Mongol fatwa and the prudent and pragmatic moderation of his Mardin fatwa begs the question: should anyone conclude that Ibn Taimiyyah (in the negative sense) used religion as a tool to achieve any desired goal? The author does not rule out the possibility. Ibn Taimiyyah defined utilitarianism as the way of the Prophets (Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, vol. 35: 32; Michot, 2006, pp. 50–53). Religious decisions must take into account the circumstances as well as the greater good. If, for example, a king embraces Islam but continues to drink *khamr*, he should not be forbidden from drinking wine if it will cause him to apostatize. Ibn Taimiyyah concluded that the Prophet's own decisions varied depending on the circumstances; when enjoining or forbidding, waging jihad or forgiving, applying punishment or forgiving, being strict or gentle (Michot, 2006, p. 53).

The issue is not that Ibn Taimiyyah's pragmatism reduces religion to a means to an end; rather, for Ibn Taimiyyah, weighing the benefits and *muḍārāt* of all actions is essential in religion, and this attitude is the guidance of the Prophets (Hoover, 2007; Vasalou, 2016). Violence is occasionally used to achieve this goal. In *al-Siyāṣah al-Syar'iyyah*, Ibn Taimiyyah describes the goal of mankind to worship God, and the role of the ruler as having the authority and power to reform society towards this goal, whether through religious guidance or the sword (Farrukh, 1966; Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, vols. 28:

244-397; Laoust, 1939). He went on to say that punishment by violence comes in two varieties: punishing misguided people living under Muslim rule and fighting those not under Muslim control, such as infidels (*kuffār*) living outside Muslim territory who openly and deliberately oppose and fight against Islam. Ibn Taimiyyah does not support revengeful, destructive, or senseless violence, or violence motivated by greed. The ruler must weigh the benefits and drawbacks of the entire action before deciding on the best one. Given that Ibn Taimiyyah gave no legitimacy to violence other than to uphold religion, the anti-Mongol fatwa arose from this concept (Hoover, 2018; Ibn Taimiyyah, 2004, vol. 28: 284).

Thus, like utilitarianism in general, Ibn Taimiyyah's utilitarianism can easily adapt to different contexts and touches a broader spectrum in the modern Muslim world (Michot & Ibn Taimiyyah, 2012, p. 240). As previously stated, Bin Laden's 1996 call for war on America and its allies used the logic of the anti-Mongol fatwa under the guise that fighting to protect the religion is an obligation even if the combatants are not devout Muslims. Similarly, al-Qaraḍāwī refers to Ibn Taimiyyah in support of a ruling that weighs benefits and harms (*muḍārāt*). Michot's analysis, on the other hand, seeks to prevent the use of Ibn Taimiyyah for radical purposes by emphasizing his critical loyalty and patience with the tyranny of the Mamlūk rulers. However, Ibn Taimiyyah's loyalty to the government was not unconditional; it may have reached its limit when the ruler became so corrupt that there was a logical reason to replace him with a better one. It could be argued that modern radicals believe, at least implicitly, that they have reached their limit and that taking up arms to overthrow an allegedly apostate ruler will result in the greater good in the long run. They then seek authoritative precedents to back up their actions.

Because of his prolific thought, courage, and activism, Ibn Taimiyyah sets a precedent that can be taken in two directions: moderation or radicalization. Ibn Taimiyyah justified fighting Mongols who professed Islam through creative interpretations of early Islamic history, and 'Abd al-Salām Faraj and his followers appropriated anti-Mongol fatwas to justify rebellion against legitimate rulers. Michot used these fatwas to spread his views on nonviolent Islamic revolution and active Muslim participation in society. Ibn Taimiyyah and his diverse followers were both engaged in a 'hermeneutic scramble' of the past to meet the needs of the present. Michot claims that he is using Ibn Taimiyyah for the benefit of Muslims, whereas Islamic radicals completely contradict his vision. They would argue that Michot misunderstood Ibn Taimiyyah and vice versa. The radicals lack a scholarly and authentic reading of Ibn Taimiyyah. However, all sides are attempting to gain a voice in the Muslim community, and, like Ibn Taimiyyah, they are undoubtedly attempting to establish Islam through all calculated means. And when and how violence becomes one of the means to that end will remain a question.

Conclusion

Ibn Taimiyyah is a leading medieval scholar who is frequently quoted by jihadists. Jihadists cite him to justify the jihad doctrine of the apostasy of Muslim rulers who do not apply Islamic law and the obligation of jihad against them. Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa is also used to justify indiscriminate acts of terror and the permissibility of suicide bombings in jihad. The preceding description demonstrates that while some (minor) fatwas of Ibn Taimiyyah are quoted correctly, the majority are quoted randomly or wildly to suit their interests. Even these appropriate citations are problematic because they have moved beyond the context in which the fatwa was issued.

This article investigates the connection between Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwas, particularly the anti-Mongol fatwa and the Mardin fatwa, and the radicals' jihad fatwa. *First*, the use of the anti-Mongol fatwa to condemn Muslim rulers' apostasy and the obligation of jihad against them. This article agrees with Jād al-Ḥaqq, al-Qaraḍāwī, and Michot, who argue that the fatwa does not mean what the jihadists believe it does. Haqq claims that the comparison between the Mongols and Egypt's ruler (Sadat) is flawed because the Mongols were irreligious and thus cannot be compared to Sadat's Muslim government. Michot also dismisses the analogy of the Mongols with Muslim rulers; instead, they analogize Muslim rulers with the Mamlūk dynasty which Ibn Taimiyyah sees as a lesser 'evil'. In contrast to Faraj and the jihadists, Ibn Taimiyyah was fighting foreign invaders and had to work with Mamlūk armies whose status was no better than that of the current Muslim rulers, whereas the jihadists were fighting against the very official authority that Ibn Taimiyyah said he should obey.

Second, it is difficult to defend Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa argument about the permissibility of jihad without the blessing of the legitimate government. This is because the jihad against the Mongols was led by the Mamlūk sultanate rather than Ibn Taimiyyah. Following the Mongol invasion of 1299/1300, Ibn Taimiyyah traveled to Egypt to request that the Mamlūk sultan send troops to combat the Mongols. In his first anti-Mongol fatwa, Ibn Taimiyyah emphasized the importance of good cooperation with Muslim leaders; good or bad, in jihad. Some of Ibn Taimiyyah's statements suggest that Muslims would fight unconditionally in self-defense. "Nothing is more obligatory after believing in Allah than the expulsion of invaders who destroy religion and the world (*al-dīn wa al-dunyā*), and fighting is unavoidable. Everyone should use all of his or her strength, tongue, and knowledge." Ibn Taimiyyah's allegiance to the official authority (Mamlūk) in his jihad against the Mongols demonstrates that, if possible, Ibn Taimiyyah required the permission of an *Imām*. The jihadists claim to be fighting in self-defense, but this cannot be compared to Ibn Taimiyyah's case because the jihadists were fighting their official rulers, whereas Ibn Taimiyyah was fighting foreign invaders.

Third, the author cannot find a treatise in which Ibn Taimiyyah discusses the permissibility of committing 'suicide,' except in a short treatise by Ibn Taimiyyah entitled *Qā'idah fī al-Inghimās fī al-Aduww fa hal yubāḥ* (Ibn Taimiyyah, 2002), which allows suicide in jihad. At first glance, it may appear that Ibn Taimiyyah was advocating

jihad suicide (Molloy, 2009). However, the jihadists misinterpreted this treatise in at least two ways: *first*, Ibn Taimiyyah approved of 'suicide' in jihad only when the jihad was justified, and *second*, rather than quoting an anti-Mongol fatwa, the jihadists should have quoted this treatise to justify their suicide bombings. This demonstrates their limited understanding of Ibn Taimiyyah's works.

Based on the foregoing analysis, it is possible to conclude that the radicals' citation of Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa is inaccurate and full of 'the politicization' of group interests. Even the few fatwas that are correctly quoted are out of context. As a result, more research into the jihadists' interpretation of Ibn Taimiyyah's fatwa is required to expose the ambiguity and errors in their reasoning. So that the jihad fatwa of Ibn Taimiyyah can be read, understood, and placed in its proper context.

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