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Reconciling Ibn Taymiyya's Legitimization of Violence with His Vision of Universal Salvation

This paper will test a hypothesis pulling together two apparently disparate aspects of Ibn Taymiyya's thought. One is Ibn Taymiyya's view that in God's mercy everyone will eventually attain salvation from the Fire, even unbelievers. The other is his own justification of jihad against alleged enemies of Islam and his reputation as an inspiration for contemporary radical Islamism. What stands behind them both, it will be suggested, is a kind of paternalism, that is, the idea that God and humans adhering to God's religion know what is to everyone's ultimate benefit and that violence can be a legitimate means to attaining that end.