



Philosophy to Apostasy
 The Cautionary Story of ‘Abd Allāh al-Qaṣīmī
 By Abū al-Ḥasan Mālik al-Akhḍar

“May Allāh curse intelligence without *Imān*, and may He be pleased with slow-wittedness accompanied by *Taqwā*.” —al-Dhahabī, from the biography of the *mulhīd* (apostate) Ibn al-Rāwandī

*S*_{HAYKH} Ismā‘īl ‘Atīq stated, “I heard *Shaykh* [‘Abd Allāh al-Qar‘āwī] recall his travels to Egypt: ‘In Egypt, I met some Saudi students of knowledge, including ‘Abd Allāh ‘Ali al-Qaṣīmī, *Shaykh* ‘Abd Allāh Abū Yābis, and *Shaykh* ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Rāshid. As for the first (i.e. ‘Abd Allāh ‘Ali al-Qaṣīmī), he was infatuated with newspapers, politics, books of literature, and the deviant opinions of thinkers...’¹ This infatuation of ‘Abd Allāh al-Qaṣīmī would turn his life into a cautionary story. He was born in the region of al-Qaṣīm in 1907 CE. His father separated from his mother when he was four, so he was raised in the home of his maternal grandfather. However, his grandfather was unable to care for his family, so the young boy went to work in a livestock market, living almost hand to mouth. Later, he migrated to Riyāḍ to reunite with his father, who he described as a “staunch worshipper.”

Around the age of nineteen, al-Qaṣīmī traveled to Cairo to study in *al-Azhar* university. However, not long into his studies, he found one of his professors, Yūsuf al-Dajwī, espousing deviant beliefs and disparaging the *Salafī* methodology. In a series of articles published in *Nūr al-Islam* magazine, al-Dajwī defended the heretical *Ṣūfī* practice of seeking blessings from the dead. The young student responded. He issued an astonishing refutation against his teacher entitled *al-Burūq al-Najdiyyah*, and, as a result, was expelled from the university.

He went on to author several more works repudiating the opponents of the *Salafī* call, including the *Sufis*, *Shi‘ite*, secularists, etc. The most well-known of these writings was the book entitled *al-Ṣirā’ bayna al-Islām wa al-Wathaniyyah* (*The Struggle Between Islam and Idolatry*), a two volume response to the *Shi‘ite shaykh* Muḥsin al-Amīn, who attacked *Salafīyyah* and the call of *Shaykh al-Islam* Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (رحمة الله). This refutation was extolled by his contemporaries, until it was said that “al-Qaṣīmī has offered the dowry of *Jannah* with this book.” He wrote of intentions to pen an additional volume, but a third would never come. For after years of defending the sound creed and its people, al-Qaṣīmī stunned scholars and common folk alike.

After accompanying the people of desires, exploring the doubts of skeptics, and becoming infatuated with the writings of philosophical thinkers, he would deviate—nay, apostate, and begin authoring books renouncing Islam, questioning the existence of Allāh, and refuting all he once

¹ *Al-Masīrah* (p. 216)

defended. The esteemed scholar ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Nāṣir al-Sa’dī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) wrote, “To proceed: Indeed, I came across the book authored by ‘Abd Allāh al-Qaṣīmī entitled *Hadhihi Hiya al-Aghlāl*, a book which renounces the Religion.” He goes on to state that before writing this book, al-Qaṣīmī

was known for knowledge and an alignment with the *Salafī* methodology. His previous works were filled with support for the truth and repudiation of the people of innovation and disbelief...until he stunned the people with this book and nullified everything he had previously written about the Religion.²

This reminds one of the statement of Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ), “Misguidance, utter misguidance is to affirm what you used to reject, and reject what you used to affirm.”³ It also cautions the believer from opening himself up to thoughts and writings of those who oppose correct belief. *Imām* al-Barbahārī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) beautifully sums this up in his statement: “Indeed, listening [to the people of rhetoric]—even if you do not accept their speech—will place doubt in your heart.”⁴ History testifies to this. For it was after the translation of the works of the Greek philosophers and rhetoricians—translated in places like *Bayt al-Ḥikmah* in Baghdād—that many were affected by the thought of the *rationalist Mu’tazilah*, who averted people from understanding the Book and *Sunnah* according to the *athār* of the Pious Predecessors to the speech of Aristotle, Plato, et al.

Herein lies the danger of giving currency to statements and ideas that contradict the way of the *Salaf*. And if one like al-Qaṣīmī, known to some of his contemporaries as the “Ibn Taymiyyah of his era,” could fall into disbelief as a result of delving into such ideas, how much more the small student of knowledge or the common person? Allāh instructs us to turn away from falsehood altogether:

﴿ وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ

بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِ مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

“And when you see those who engage in false speech concerning Our verses, then turn away from them until they enter into another conversation. And if *Shayṭān* should cause you to forget, then do not remain after the reminder with the wrongdoing people” [*al-An‘ām* 6:68].

The noble *Tabi‘ī* Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) held that this verse was revealed concerning the people of innovation, and was quoted as saying, “Those fastest to apostate are the people of

² *Tanzīh al-Dīn* (p. 3)

³ *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā* of al-Bayhaqī (no. 18513)

⁴ *Sharḥ al-Sunnah* (p. 117)

desires.”⁵ Once a man came to him and said, “So-and-so (i.e. an innovator) wants to come see you.” Ibn Sīrīn replied, “Tell him no, for the hearts of the children of Adam are weak, and I fear I will hear a word, and my heart will never be the same.”⁶

Therefore, the believer suffices himself with the two Revelations—according to the understanding of the *Salaf*—safeguards his heart from the doubts and deviant opinions of thinkers, and prays that Allāh guides it aright, mindful of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) constant supplication, “O Turner of the hearts, keep my heart firm upon Your religion.” One of the companions heard this and said, “O Messenger of Allāh, we have believed in you and that which you have come with, so do you fear for us?” He said, “Yes, for the hearts are between two Fingers from the Fingers of Allāh. He turns them as He pleases.”⁷ O Allāh, keep our hearts firm upon Your Religion.



⁵ *Al-Sharīah* of al-Ajurrī (p. 426)

⁶ *Al-Ibānah* (2/446)

⁷ Collected by al-Tirmidhī in his *al-Jāmi'* (no 2139). It has been authenticated by al-Albānī in his checking of al-Tirmidhī (no. 2139).