

# Shaykh al-Islām

## Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and Shirk — 03

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This series of articles addresses the claim of the Qubūriyyūn and Yasir Qadhi that Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb created a false conception of shirk from the Qur’ān and was not preceded by anyone in judging certain actions and forms of invocation to be shirk.

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### FAKHR AL-DĪN AL-RĀZĪ ON THE PEOPLES’ PREOCCUPATION WITH THE GRAVES FOR INTERCESSION AS A MANIFESTATION OF SHIRK IN HIS ERA



Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606)—[a key figurehead and major source for Ash‘arīs, whose doubts and misguidance Ibn Taymiyyah refuted extensively in the matter of Allāh’s attributes]—wrote, in the subject matter of shirk, with respect to the verse:

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعُونَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

**“And they worship besides Allah things that neither harm them, nor profit them, and they say: ‘They are our intercessors with Allāh.’” (10:18):<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Tafsīr al-Rāzī (16/73).

﴿ وأما النوع الثاني ﴾ ما حكاه الله تعالى عنهم في هذه الآية ، وهو قولهم ( هؤلاء شفعاؤنا عند الله ) فاعلم أن من الناس من قال إن أولئك الكفار توهّموا أن عبادة الأصنام أشد في تعظيم الله من عبادة الله سبحانه وتعالى . فقالوا ليست لنا أهلية أن نشغل بعبادة الله تعالى بل نحن نشغل بعبادة هذه الأصنام ، وأنها تكون شفعا لنا عند الله تعالى . ثم اختلفوا في أنهم كيف قالوا في الأصنام إنها شفعاؤنا عند الله ؟ وذكروا فيه أقوالا كثيرة : فاحدها : أنهم اعتقدوا أن المتولي لكل إقليم من أقاليم العالم ، روح معين من أرواح عالم الأفلاك ، فعينوا لذلك الروح صنما معيناً واشتغلوا بعبادة ذلك الصنم ، ومقصودهم عبادة ذلك الروح ، ثم اعتقدوا أن ذلك الروح يكون عبداً للاله الأعظم ومشتغلاً بعبودته . وثانيها : أنهم كانوا يعبدون الكواكب وزعموا أن الكواكب هي التي لها أهلية عبودية الله تعالى ، ثم لما رأوا أن الكواكب تطلع وتغرب وضعوا لها أصناماً معينة واشتغلوا بعبادتها ، ومقصودهم توجيه العبادة إلى الكواكب . وثالثها ؛ أنهم وضعوا طلسمات معينة على تلك الأصنام والأوثان ، ثم تقربوا إليها كما يفعل أصحاب الطلسمات . ورابعها : أنهم وضعوا هذه الأصنام والأوثان على صور أنبيائهم وأكابرهم ، وزعموا أنهم متى اشتغلوا بعبادة هذه التماثيل ، فإن أولئك الأكابر يكونون شفعا لهم عند الله تعالى ، ونظيره في هذا الزمان اشتغال كثير من الخلق بتعظيم قبور الأكابر ، على اعتقاد أنهم إذا عظموا قبورهم فانهم يكونون شفعا لهم عند الله ، وخامسها : أنهم اعتقدوا أن الاله نور عظيم ، وأن الملائكة أنوار فوضعوا على صورة الاله الأكبر الصنم الأكبر ، وعلى صورة الملائكة صوراً أخرى . وسادسها : لعل القوم حلولية ، وجوزوا حلول الاله في بعض الأجسام العالية الشريفة .

واعلم أن كل هذه الوجوه باطلة بالدليل الذي ذكره الله تعالى وهو قوله ( ويعبدون من دون الله مالا يضرهم ولا ينفعهم ) وتقديره ما ذكرناه من الوجوه الثلاثة .

In the above passage al-Rāzī is speaking about the part of the verse in which Allāh is quoting the argument of those disbelievers who worship others besides Him, saying: **“These are our intercessors with Allāh.”**

So al-Rāzī explains that these people argued that they should not be occupied with worshipping Allāh directly but with worshipping these idols because this is greater in venerating Allāh and because they will intercede for them with Allāh.

Then al-Rāzī says that these people differed from this point onwards **as to how they understood these idols to be intercessors for them**, and he says that they mentioned many sayings and explanations in this regard.

He outlined six explanations, and from them:

The first of them: That they believed that a specific spirit from the spirits of the world of celestial bodies is in control of a particular region from the regions of the world, and thus they designated a specific idol for that spirit, and they occupied themselves with worshipping that idol. And their intent (behind worshipping the idol) was to worship that spirit. Then they also believed that the spirit was a slave of the greatest deity, and was occupied in worshipping it (the greatest deity).

The second of them: That they used to worship the stars, and claimed that the stars are deserving of servitude to Allāh, the Most High. Then when they saw that the stars rise and set, they made specific idols for them and were occupied with worshipping them. And their intent (behind worshipping the idols) was to direct worship towards the stars.

And the third of them: That they placed specific talismans upon those idols and statues, and then sought nearness to them, as is done by the makers of talismans.

After these three he then says:

And the fourth of them: That they made these idols and statues upon the form and shape of their Prophets and senior [righteous] ones (al-akābir), and they claimed that when they occupied themselves with the worship of these statues, then those senior [righteous] ones will be intercessors for them with

**Allāh. And the equivalent of this in our time is the occupation of many of the creation with the veneration of the graves of the senior [righteous] ones, upon the belief that when they venerate their graves, then they (the deceased) will become intercessors for them with Allāh.**

After mentioning another two manifestations, he then finishes by saying:

Know that all of these angles are futile by way of the evidence that Allāh the Most High has mentioned, which is His saying:

**“And they worship besides Allāh things that neither harm them, nor profit them...” (10:18).**

and its corroboration is upon what we have mentioned (previously) from three angles.

## NOTES AND COMMENTARY

### 1. The statement of al-Rāzī:

ونظيره في هذا الزمان اشتغال كثير من الخلق بتعظيم قبور الأكابر على اعتقاد أنهم إذا عظموا  
قبورهم فإنهم يكونون شفعاء لهم عند الله

And the equivalent of this in our time is the occupation of many of the creation with the veneration of the graves of the senior [righteous] ones, upon the belief that when they venerate their graves, then they (the deceased) will become intercessors for them with Allāh.

Is a refutation of Yasir Qadhi and his deceptive claims. We explained previously that he is engaged in deception at a number of levels, knowingly or unknowingly.

He is falsifying **the ground realities** in terms of what takes place in many lands of the Muslims and what has taken place historically, from many centuries ago and the fact that scholars characterised such matters in the same way as Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb did, having preceded him by centuries.

As we mentioned in Part 1, Qadhi presents the idea that there has to be **a monolithic construction of shirk** already in place, already rooted in the beliefs of the people, before their words and actions take the ruling of shirk.

In other words, we basically have to have **Roman, Greek or Hindu polytheism** in our midst for certain words or deeds to be considered shirk. We have to have a scenario of a pantheon, a hierarchy of mini-gods given a share of rubūbiyyah, of tadbīr (regulation) of Allāh’s creation, having independent control over harm and benefit thereby.

And without this scenario we can’t really judge the various types of invocations or solicitation for aid (**isti‘ānah**) and rescue (**istighāthah**) and intercession (**shafā‘ah**) from other than Allāh to be shirk.

Qadhi states that what he describes is the notion of shirk in all previous Paganistic philosophies and was also that of the Quraysh *and that this is not what Muslims are upon today and not what they have been upon in the past*. And as such, we cannot judge certain actions to be shirk.

He claims Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb misunderstood shirk and that he created a false conception of Paganism from the Qur’ān and that he misinterpreted certain āyāt such as (10:18) with respect to intercession and others.

In the above speech of al-Rāzī, we see that he has placed the action of those people venerating the awliyā’ (the akābir), their graves, seeking intercession thereby, to be an equivalent

manifestation of the shirk, the idolatry of past nations. So Qadhi’s falsehood, his **academic swindle** rather, is ended right here.

2. Attachment to the graves in veneration of the awliyā’ upon the notion that the intercession of the awliyā’ can be acquired thereby, for the fulfilment of needs and for safety and sustenance, that this is a route to salvation and felicity in this life and the next, then this has indeed been present in the Muslim nation for many long centuries, well before Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and even Ibn Taymiyyah. Thus, people turned to the graves and tombs as places of celebration, congregation, veneration, and they make du‘ā for their needs and for intercession, directly from the deceased and for rescue and refuge, as would take place in the time of Ibn Taymiyyah when the Tartars approached.

Ibn Taymiyyah said, about some of the people in his time, that they:

... used to call upon the dead and ask from them and would seek protection from them and humble themselves to them (in times of need). And perhaps what they used to do with the dead was greater because they would seek the dead in times of hardships that came upon them, so they would call (upon them) in the manner done by the one stricken with a calamity, hoping in the fulfilment of his need through his (the deceased’s) supplication, or by supplicating to this person, or by supplicating at his grave instead of worshipping Allāh, the Most High, and calling upon Him alone.

However, they would do this on many occasions and as a matter of habit, such that even when an external, non-Muslim enemy, made its way to Damascus, they all came out seeking deliverance through the graves of the dead - those in whom they place their hope of removing the harms (of the enemy). And one

of the poets said: “O you who fear the Tartars. Seek refuge with the grave of Abu ‘Umar.” Or he said: “Seek refuge in the grave of Abu ‘Umar. He wil deliver you from the harms.”<sup>2</sup>

And al-Rāzī—preceding Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb by six centuries—stated that what those earlier Mushrikūn used to do actually surfaced in his time, with another manifestation, with respect to the graves where the inhabitants are sought for their intercessiion, and that it is futile, and constitutes worship of other than Allāh.

This is what Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb was addressing in his time.

**3.** Once it is clear that this phenomenon of veneration of graves and their inhabitants, in connection to intermediation and intercession was present in al-Rāzī’s time, and likewise Ibn Taymiyyah’s time and also in Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s time, and they all made the same judgement regarding it, using the same verses, that it is worship of other than Allāh, is kufr and shirk, then the claims of the Qubūriyyūn, those who sympathize with them, or those who err in this matter—in whose defence Qadhi speaks and whose doubts he regurgitates—is falsified.

Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (رحمهُ اللهُ) did not make any presentation of shirk from the Qur’ān in which he was not preceded in by others.

**This vicious slander must be repented from.**

**4.** Qadhi is using **ambiguity** and **intricacy** in some of the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah to spread his shubuhāt.

For example, Ibn Taymiyyah says in some places that if a person is at a grave and asks the person in the grave to make du‘ā to Allāh for him, [upon the belief that the dead can hear him], in

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<sup>2</sup> Al-Radd ‘alā al-Bakrī (2/731-740).

the same way that you would ask a living person who is right next to you, he says that this is a route to shirk, and is an innovation and is an evil.<sup>3</sup> So this would be when it is outside of any conception of intermediation and intercession.

However, in other places, the discussions of Ibn Taymiyyah are in the context of when people do these things with the notion of the righteous dead being a route to Allāh, for intercession, and that if these righteous people are approached and requested from, it is more befitting, because they, the seekers are themselves are sinful, and Allāh will accept the intercession of those righteous dead because of their righteousness, and that if they frequent the graves and venerate them they will win favour with the righteous dead who will intercede for them.<sup>4</sup>

So this is the shirk of the people of past nations and when it is done upon this notion—**and this notion has certainly existed in this ummah and is the stated justification for these deeds**—then that person is upon shirk and has actions of shirk, irrespective of whether any one particular action of his is shirk or is merely ḥarām and bid‘ah and a means to shirk.

Just because a person does an action, which in itself, is considered—in some of the speech of Ibn Taymiyyah:

- **a means to shirk** but in other places,
- among the actions of the people of shirk**, or elsewhere,
- **shirk** itself

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<sup>3</sup> If a person, innocently held the mistaken notion that when he is at the grave, the soul of the his father, mother or relative can hear him and he, thinking it to be no different to asking a living person right next to him, says “Make du‘ā for me”, this being an isolated action, outside of the notion that is with the Mushriks of intermediation and intercession, then this is a mistake, an innovation, a munkar, and a starting point for shirk, a means to shirk and it is also *among the sum of actions* of the people of shirk.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā (27/72), (3/275), al\_Radd ‘alā al-Bakrī (1/150-157).



does not mean that that person is not upon shirk—as it relates to the matter of intercession—and that this particular action of his is not also among the sum of the actions of the people of shirk, even if that particular act is not shirk in itself, but an innovation, an evil, a means to shirk.

**This is the key to understanding the various statements of Ibn Taymiyyah in which there may be ambiguity.** There are some specific things that can be shirk, in a context, and also a means to shirk, in another restricted context.

The reader is strongly advised to go back and carefully read the citation from Ibn Taymiyyah in Part 2 of this series once more, and he will grasp what has been said above, inshā’Allāh.

Here are some excerpts:<sup>5</sup>

**And the mushriks from these (ones) sometimes say:**

“We seek intercession through them”, meaning, “We request the angels and the prophets to intercede (for us), so when we come to the grave of one of them we request him to intercede for us...

And sometimes they may address the dead person at his grave (saying), “Ask your Lord for me” or they may address the living person who is absent in the same way they may address him while present, alive.

**So these types of discourse [in addressing] the angels, prophets and righteous after their death near their graves or in their absence, and addressing their statues, they are from the greatest types of shirk present with the mushriks besides the People of the Book and also amongst the innovators from the People of the Book and the Muslims who innovated (matters of) shirk and acts of worship for which Allāh, the Exalted, gave no authority...**

This and its likes is what makes clear that those who invoke

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<sup>5</sup> Majmū’ al-Fatāwā (1/157 onwards).

the Prophets and the Righteous after their death, at their graves or other than their graves, **they are from the mushriks who invoke other than Allāh**, just like those who invoke the stars, and those who took the Angels and Prophets as lords (arbāb).

## 5. To recap:

—**There is shirk in rubūbiyyah**, such as that of the Greeks, Romans, Hindus, and likewise among the Rāfiḍah and others who ascribe things to the living or the dead which are aspects of rubūbiyyah, they give them the power of tadbīr (regulation) in Allāh’s creation. So here, the logical, rational flow is from rubūbiyyah to ulūhiyyah, if they have these powers, it follows that they can be invoked, worshipped and so on.

And its refutation is that they have no power over anything, they are creatures who do not create and have no control over life, death, benefit, harm and resurrection:

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ ءَالِهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنْفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً وَلَا نُشُورًا

**“But they have taken besides Him gods which create nothing, while they are created, and possess not for themselves any harm or benefit and possess not [power to cause] death or life or resurrection.” (25:3).**

Thus, their worship is invalidated and futile.

—**There is shirk in ulūhiyyah**, this shirk being the property and reality of certain words and statements and accompanying actions of the heart, such as the one who says, when in a calamity: “Assistance O Badawī”. This is istighāthah, and there are multiple levels of shirk that are operative as unstated, unexpressed,

assumptions or subconscious beliefs, inseparable from the statement itself, within the context it is made, such as:

**a)** Knowledge of the unseen, such that al-Badawī, as a dead man, is aware of the calamity despite being tens, hundreds or thousands of miles away.

**b)** Perfection in the attribute of hearing, such that he can hear from a distance.

**c)** Having a hidden, remote power over things, above and beyond what is possible through known established means.

**d)** The presence of certain actions of the heart, such raghbah, rajā’ (aspiration, hope) and so on, that indicate a type of attachment of the heart that should only be for Allāh.

There does not have to be any prior monolithic construction of shirk in existence, like that of the Greeks, Romans and Hindus, for such speech or action to be considered shirk.

**It is shirk in its own through these considerations, and that is because there is a logical, rational, inescapable flow from ulūhiyyah to rubūbiyyah.**

So when an act of worship such as istighāthah, seeking rescue, is directed to other than Allāh in the manner described, the act has the property of being shirk, and it is inescapably so. We do not need to confirm whether that person believes al-Badawī has qualities of rubūbiyyah, **rather it is a logical, rational necessity stemming from the statement itself**, even if he does not hold it as a conscious or verbally expressed belief, whether we have knowledge of that or not.

**Otherwise, he would not have done it and would have sought aid and rescue only from Allāh.**

Thus, the judgement and property of being “shirk” belongs to this act, this speech, in this scenario.

And the refutation of this is that Allāh has prohibited invocation of those besides Him and prohibited seeking aid and seeking rescue from those who do not have power over the matters requested, whether living or dead—*irrespective of the presence or absence or such a belief*.

Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said:

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا مِنْ الظَّالِمِينَ

**“And do not invoke besides Allāh that which neither benefits you nor harms you, for if you did, then indeed you would be of the wrongdoers.”** (10:106).

So this is a prohibition of invoking anything that can neither benefit nor harm you. Its a prohibition from the act, which is described as oppression, and it means do not invoke anything other than Allāh because nothing besides Allāh has independent power over benefit and harm. And then He said: **“For if you did, then indeed you would be of the wrongdoers”**, He did not say: **“For if you believed that, then indeed you would be of the wrongdoers”**, rather, He said: **“For if you did...”**, the prohibition refers to the act, because such an act opposes factual realities, that none has power over benefit and harm but Allāh. So if you were to do that, your act would be out of place, and that is oppression, and shirk is oppression.

—**There is shirk in intercession**, because intercession belongs only to Allāh, just like forgiveness belongs only to Allāh, and it does not take place except with His permission, when He allows it to take place, and that is in the Hereafter, after He grants permission for the intercessor to intercede, and for whomever He is pleased with, that intercession should be made for him.

Now if a person frequents the graves and asks their inhabitants to intercede for him, then it can only be on the grounds that these people have independent disposal over intercession. That they can freely intercede, at will, with Allāh, for the benefit of those who frequent them, venerate their graves and so on.

So this is shirk in the matter of intercession because those whom they invoke for intercession, whether at the grave or remotely from it, **they have no say, power, or authority in the matter of intercession whatsoever**, in the same way that they have no say, power or ability in forgiving people, or bringing sustenance to them, or granting them children.

Thus, if a person goes to the grave and says: “Forgive me my sins”, or “Give me offspring”, then these belong only to Allāh alone, and similarly, if he went to the grave and said: “Intercede for me for a need among my needs”, then intercession belongs only to Allāh alone and not to anyone besides Him.<sup>6</sup>

So implied in these statements is that other than Allāh has power over forgiveness, or sustenance, or intercession, and this is an encroachment upon the dominion of Allāh and giving another a share in that dominion.

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَعَةُ جَمِيعًا

**“Say: To Allāh (alone) belongs all intercession.” (39:44).**

And just like we said with respect to ulūhiyyah, with respect to istighāthah, their is logical, rational flow from ulūhiyyah to rubūbiyyah, in that if you invoke a dead saint for rescue, the statement is shirk in and of itself, for the reasons mentioned earlier, then likewise, if you sought intercession from the dead person, then this act in and of itself, implies that that dead person

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<sup>6</sup> There are some subtleties and nuances in this subject, and they can be left for another article inshā’Allāh.

has free disposal over intercession, and thus, shares with Allāh in His dominion, because intercession is from His dominion.

Thus, the act of invoking for intercession, is like the act of invoking for forgiveness, partners are associated with Allāh therein, and this is by logical, rational necessity of the act itself. It does not require the presence of a Roman, Greek or Hindu system of a pantheon of mini-gods, regulating Allāh’s creation to be present, for the property or quality of shirk to be present in such statements and actions.

In reality, the territory that Yasir Qadhi is entering into is **the extreme Irjā’ of the Murji’ah** which is that shirk occurs only in beliefs, not in actions and statements, and that a person can invoke al-Badawī for rescue in a calamity, and that this act would not be shirk and cannot be shirk until and unless that person explicitly and verbally expresses the belief that al-Badawī is a mini-god, a demi-god, with regulatory power (tadbīr), or in the presence of belief in a hierarchical system of mini-gods. So in the absence of this, this act cannot be shirk.

However, the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

أجعلتني لله نداً؟

*“Have you made me a nidd (rival) with Allāh?”*

This was the response of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the one who said: “What Allāh willed and what you willed”, and this is in relation to what amounts to minor shirk. He did not ask the Companion, *“Do you believe that I have disposal over Allāh’s creation and that it is subject to my will?”* The belief was not enquired into. The statement was declared erroneous and tantamount to making the Prophet (ﷺ) a rival to Allāh.

This is because the property of tandīd (making a rival for Allāh) lies in the statement itself, irrespective, any underlying the belief.

Similarly, if someone was to mock Allāh, or mock the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) with words of mockery, that would be kufr in and of itself, irrespective of whether he believed that the content of words of mockery, from a factual point of view, were true or not. Even if he said: “I don’t believe that what I said was true, it’s a lie, and make-believe, but I only said it as a joke”, then that would not remove the label of kufr from it.

The Sharī‘ah has come with judgements upon beliefs, statements and actions, that they are kufr and shirk, and from them is invoking the dead for rescue and for intercession, as has preceded.

So Yasir Qadhi keeps entering into territories where his burden of ignorance, misguidance and confusion is increasing, layers upon layers, especially when he invites thousands of others to join him in his misguided intellectual adventures.

This is what happens to people who get too clever for their boots, perceiving themselves to be gifted with intellect, leading them to rely upon it and upon their awhām and fuhūm (presumptions and understandings)—

**6. Frankly, this discussion above is unnecessary given the fact what when we go to the books of the Rāfiḍah, the Ṣūfīs and the Barelwīs and their likes, we see that they explicitly attribute qualities of rubūbiyyah to the awliyā’, those they refer to as quṭb, ghawth, or gawth a’ḥam and the likes, giving them regulatory control (tadbīr) over Allāh’s creation, and they permit, rather encourage and enjoin, that they are invoked for needs and for intercession. This is apparent and clear and there is also no doubt that they have misguided common Muslims with this.**

**All of this discussion is not even needed, Qadhi’s academic swindle, his intellectual fraud, is uncovered just by this observation alone, the fact that historically speaking, many figures such as Ibn ‘Aqīl, al-Rāzī, Ibn Taymiyyah all spoke about these affairs centuries before Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb.**

**So how Yasir Qadhi can come out in such blatant denial and falsification of the actual realities is astounding.**

7. The reader should know and keep in mind the history of Yasir Qadhi, along the following:

—He was upon the way of the Surūriyyah during the 1990s, with Safar and Salmān and Jamāl Zarabozo.

—In the next decade, the 2000s he started making pacts and pledges with Sūfīs, and opening arms to third-wave Jahmites.

—In the next decade, the 2010s, he opened arms to the Rāfiḍah and called for an Ecumenical “Salafiyyah” and crystallised his revival of the manhaj of Ḥasan al-Bannā.

—And here, in the 2020s, we now see him entering into the realm of Tawḥīd and Shirk to do the same thing!

—And Allāh knows best what we may see in the 2030s.

The Salafis have been refuting the errors and orientations of Qadhi in each of these four decades, because they saw back then, what many of the ḥizbīs, haters and opposers, may Allāh guide them, are seeing now.

Abu ‘Iyaad

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