



5203 - Meaning of the word Taaghoot

the question

My question is, does the term Taaghoot include objects that do not call the people to worship them, like the sun, trees, idols, stones? Also, are righteous Muslims, like Imaam Shafi', are they called Taaghoot if the people worship them or their graves?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Not everything that is worshipped instead of Allaah can be considered to be taaghoot. The most correct scholarly view concerning the meaning of the word Taaghoot is that of Ibn Jareer al-Tabari, who said in his Tafseer (3/21):

The correct opinion concerning Taaghoot, in my view, is that it refers to everyone who arrogates to himself a position that is befitting only for Allaah, and so is worshipped instead of Him, either by forcing others to worship him or by accepting their willing worship. The one that is thus worshipped may be a human being, or a shaytaan (devil), or an idol, or a statue, or some other being.

He also said that the root of Taaghoot implies putting oneself in a higher position and overstepping the mark.

The Prophets, scholars, righteous people and awliyaa' (those who are close to Allaah) did not force people to worship them or obey them in such a thing. On the contrary, they issued the sternest warning against it. The purpose behind Allaah's sending Messengers to mankind was to call them to believe in Allaah alone and to disbelieve in other gods besides Him. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming):



‘Worship Allaah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Taaghoot (all false deities, etc. i.e., do not worship Taaghoot besides Allaah)...’ [al-Nahl 16:36]

And Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (remember) when Allaah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): “O ‘Eesaa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Did you say unto men: ‘Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allaah?’ ” He will say: “Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner-self though I do not know what is in Yours; truly, You, only You, are the All-Knower of all that is hidden (and unseen). “Never did I say to them aught except what You (Allaah) did command me to say: ‘Worship Allaah, my Lord and your Lord.’ And I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them; and You are a Witness to all things” [al-Maa’idah 5:116-117]

If people worship Prophets or scholars instead of Allaah, we should not apply the word Taaghoot to the object of their worship.

If people exaggerate about al-Shaafa’i or any other scholar (may Allaah have mercy on them), and call upon them for help instead of Allaah, or worships their graves, there is no sin on those scholars; on the contrary, the burden of sin is on the one who associates others in worship with Allaah (Shirk). The same is true in the case of the Christians who worship ‘Eesaa (Jesus – peace be upon him) alongside Allaah. ‘Eesaa (peace be upon him) will not bear any part of their burden of sin. A brief definition of Taaghoot is: whoever is worshipped instead of Allaah and accepts that. It is well known that ‘Eesaa (peace be upon him) and other Prophets, and also al-Shaafa’i and other scholars who believed in Allaah alone (Tawheed) would never accept to be worshipped instead of Allaah. On the contrary, they forbade that and preached the message of Tawheed. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (remember) when Allaah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): “O ‘Eesaa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Did you say unto men: ‘Worship me and my mother as two gods besides



Allaah?’ ” He will say: “Glory be to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, You would surely have known it. You know what is in my inner self though I do not know what is in Yours; truly, You, only You, are the All Knower of all that is hidden (and unseen). “Never did I say to them aught except what You (Allaah) did command me to say: ‘Worship Allaah, my Lord and your Lord.’ And I was a witness over them while I dwelt amongst them, but when You took me up, You were the Watcher over them; and You are a Witness to all things” [al-Maa’idah 5:116-117].

And Allaah knows best.