



5203 - What Is Taghut?

the question

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

Summary of answer

Taghut in Islam refers to anyone or anything that is worshipped instead of Allah, and accepts or claims that worship or divine status. Prophets and righteous scholars are excluded, as they never sought or accepted worship and forbade it. The Quran commands believers to reject Taghut and worship Allah alone.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Understanding the Concept of Taghut

Not everything that is worshipped instead of Allah can be considered to be Taghut. The most correct scholarly view concerning the meaning of the word Taghut is that of Ibn Jarir At-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him), who said in his Tafsir (3/21):

“The correct opinion concerning Taghut, in my view, is that [it refers to everyone who arrogates to himself a position that is befitting only for Allah](#) , 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 shaytan (devil), or an idol, or a statue, or some other being [...] the root of Taghut implies putting oneself in a higher position and overstepping the mark.” (End quote)



Why Prophets and Scholars Are Not Taghut

The Prophets, scholars, righteous people and [Awliya' \(those who are close to Allah\)](#) 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 [Allah's sending Messengers to mankind](#) was to call them to believe in Allah alone and to disbelieve in other gods besides Him. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And verily, We have sent among every Ummah (community, nation) a Messenger (proclaiming): 'Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid (or keep away from) Taghut (all false deities, etc. i.e., do not worship Taghut besides Allah)...} [An-Nahl 16:36]

And Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And (remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): "O `Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Did you say unto men: 'Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?' " 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 (Allah) did command me to say: 'Worship Allah, 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-Ma'idah 5:116-117]

[If people worship Prophets or scholars instead of Allah](#) , we should not apply the word Taghut to the object of their worship.

If people exaggerate about Ash-Shafi'i or any other scholar (may Allah have mercy on them), and call upon them for help instead of Allah, 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 Allah (Shirk). The same is true in the case of the Christians who worship `Isa (Jesus – peace be upon him) alongside Allah. `Isa (peace be upon him) will not bear any part of their burden of sin.



A Simple Explanation of Taghut

A brief definition of Taghut is: whoever is worshipped instead of Allah and accepts that. It is well known that `Isa (peace be upon him) and other Prophets, and also Ash-Shafi`i and other scholars who believed in Allah alone ([Tawhid](#)) would never accept to be worshipped instead of Allah. On the contrary, they forbade that and preached the message of Tawhid. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{And (remember) when Allah will say (on the Day of Resurrection): “O `Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary)! Did you say unto men: ‘Worship me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?’ ” 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 (Allah) did command me to say: ‘Worship Allah, 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-Ma’idah 5:116-117]

And Allah knows best.