

Worshipping idols

Based on the works of Shaykh Saalih al Fawzaan (حفظه الله)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

QUESTION: Why is it that we find people worshipping the idols that they have in their room or in their temples, when it is obvious that a piece of stone cannot do anything for them?

ANSWER:

One of the scholars from several hundred years ago called ibn ul Qayyim explained this phenomenon.

He mentioned in his book *Ighaathatul lahfaan* (2/220):

“The setting up of an idol was originally in the form of an object of worship which was hidden.

So (the people) made the idol in its image, set it up and shaped it, so that it could be a representation of the hidden deity and take its place (i.e. the place of the hidden god).”

The idols that people have are supposed to be representations of god or gods that people cannot see or sense – so they make a physical form of their deity in order to have something tangible to direct their worship to.¹

Muslims do not accept this idea, and idols are strictly forbidden in Islam (as indeed they are in the Bible, although we still see certain branches of Christianity encouraging statues of saints and of Jesus).

Muslims believe that they should direct their worship to Allaah alone without needing any tangible representation of Allaah to do so. To make a statue and direct any worship towards it constitutes an act of shirk (polytheism) which is the gravest sin in Islam.

¹ Refer to *'Aqeedah ut Tawheed* p30 of Shaykh Saalih al Fawzaan for more information