

learn that some thought it meant الشيطان, others الساحر or الكاهن, others أوثان or أصنام, and some thought it a name for al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā. The general opinion, however, is that it is a genuine Arabic word, a form فعلوت from طنى to go beyond the limit (*LA*, xix, 232; *TA*, x, 225, and Rāghib, op. cit.). This is plausible, but hardly satisfactory, and we learn from as-Suyūṭī, *Itq*, 322; *Mutaw*, 37, that some of the early authorities recognized it as a loan-word from Abyssinian.

Geiger, 56, sought its origin in the Rabbinic טעות error which is sometimes used for idols, as in the Jerusalem Talmud, *Sanh*, x, 28^d, אוי לכם ולטעותכם “woe to you and to your idols”, and whose cognate טעוה is frequently used in the Targums for idolatry,¹ a meaning easily developed from the primary verbal meaning of טעא to go astray (cf. Heb. טעה; Syr. ܬܥܐ; Ar. طنى).

Geiger has had many followers in this theory of a Jewish origin for Ṭāghūt,² but others have thought a Christian origin more probable. Schwally, *Idioticon*, 38, points out that whereas in Edessene Syriac the common form is ܬܥܬܐ meaning error, yet in the Christian-Palestinian dialect we find the form ܬܥܬܐ,³ which gives quite as close an equivalent as the Targumic טעוה. The closest parallel, however, is the Eth. ጣጥ from an unused verbal root ጠፀ (the equivalent of טע, طنى), which primitively means defection from the true religion, and then is used to name any superstitious beliefs, and also is a common word for idols, translating the εἰδωλα of both the LXX and N.T. It is probable, as Nöldeke, *Neue Beiträge*, 35, notes, that this word itself is ultimately derived from Aramaic, but we can be reasonably certain that as-Suyūṭī's authorities were right in giving the Arabic word an Abyssinian origin.⁴

¹ Geiger, 203, and see examples in Levy, *TW*, i, 312.

² Von Kremer, *Ideen*, 226, n.; Fraenkel, *Vocab*, 23; Pautz, *Offenbarung*, 175; Eickmann, *Angelologie*, 48; Margoliouth, *ERE*, vi, 249; Hirschfeld, *Judische Elemente*, 65.

³ Schulthess, *Lex*, 76. Mingana, *Syriac Influence*, 85, also holds to a Syr. origin for the word.

⁴ Nöldeke, op. cit., 48. It should be noted, however, that in the incantation texts טעוה means false deity, which is very close to the Qur'ānic usage. Cf. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts*, p. 290.