



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL  
**DIFFERENT TYPES OF KUFR**

INTRODUCTION

Knowing what is disbelief is also a very important and essential knowledge so that we can warn ourselves and our companions from deviations.

Kufr in Arabic means covering and concealing something.

In shar'i terminology it means "not believing in Allaah and His Messenger, whether that is accompanied by denial or it is not accompanied by denial but rather doubt, or turning away from faith out of jealousy or arrogance, or because one is following whims and desires that prevent one from following the message. So kufr is the attribute of everyone who rejects something that Allaah has commanded us to believe in, after news of that has reached him, whether he rejects it in his heart without uttering it, or he speaks those words of rejection without believing it in his heart, or he does both; or he does an action which is described in the texts as putting one beyond the pale of faith." See *Majmoo' al-Fataawaby* Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, 12/335; *al-Ihkaam fi Usool al-Ahkaam* by Ibn Hazam, 1/45.

Ibn Hazam said in his book *al-Fasl*: "Rejecting something for which there is sound proof that there can be no faith without believing in it is kufr, and uttering words for which there is proof that uttering them is kufr is kufr. Doing any action for which there is proof that it is kufr is also kufr."

Learning about Kufr is an essential part of Muslim's knowledge about his faith. Without knowing Kufr, you cannot do justice to Tawheed. Kufr is used in the Glorious Qur'an for people who cover up or hide the truth. It also uses this word to point out those who denied the favors of Allah by not accepting his Dominion and Authority. Therefore Kufr is the opposite of Imaan or Disbelief in Allah and a Non-Believer is called Kaafir.

**Who is categorised as a disbeliever**

A person can be categorized as Kaafir or Murtadd (meaning apostate) if the following **twelve beliefs or actions** are found in him. Everyone should be aware of what Kufr is so that we can save ourselves from its dangers. Not knowing about kufr may result in you thinking that you are a Muslim, yet in reality you come under the category of Kaafir (May Allah save us from such disgrace).

However, unless we have clear and irrefutable evidence, ensure not to haste in labeling a person who claims to be Muslim as a kaafir (disbeliever) or Murtadd (Apostate). Leave this job to the scholars of Islam. But when you feel the need of letting people know about the person's kufr, you may mention that his actions portray kufr in them. The reason for not directly assigning a person the label of a kaafir (Disbeliever) is the warning from prophet (pbuh) in the below Hadith:

*Ibn Umar (radiallahu 'anhu) reports that the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said "Any person who called his brother 'O Unbeliever' (has in fact done an act by which this kufr) would return to one of them. If it were so as he (the accuser) asserted, (the kufr of the accused would be confirmed, but if the kufr was not true) then it returned to him (the man who called his brother Muslim a kaafir)." Muslim.*

There are matters which may indeed indicate or even necessitate that a person be a disbeliever (kaafir) such as defiling the Qur'aan or cursing the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) regardless of what the person espouses and it is only Allah who knows the unseen. As humans we can only judge or make determinations from what is outwardly evident.

**Kufr (disbelief) is of two types:** action ('amaly) and belief ('itiqaady ), some of which may be termed "kufr doona kufr" that is, a degree of kufr less than the total kufr which does not necessarily put one outside of Islam although such a person's Islam may be doubtful or in grave danger. This is the explanation of Qur'aan 5:44 by the companion Ibn Abbaas (radiallahu 'anhu) collected by Ibn Jareer and quoted by Ibn Katheer on the authority of 'Ataa.

## THE 12 BELIEFS OR ACTIONS WHICH LEAD TO KUFR

- 1) To disavow Allah's Lordship (Ruboobiyah) or Deity and singular right to be worshipped (Uloohiyah) [Qur'aan 4:48 & 116, 5:72, 39:2-3, 51:56] or the message of any of the Messengers of Allah (Tawheed) [Qur'aan 10:35, 16:36] or to claim that any Messenger or Prophet (Rasool or Nabi) came after the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam). [Qur'aan 6:93, 6:21, 7:37, 11:18-19, 18:15, 29:68, 33:40, 39:32, 61:8]
- 2) To deny or reject any of Allah's Attributes or Names (Asmaa was Sifaat) i.e. Living, Knowing, Hearing, Seeing, Merciful, having a face and hands (though we know not in what manner yet certainly not like His creation), or to add to them that which is not mentioned in the Qur'aan or authentic Sunnah. i.e. Belief that Allah is not above His creation & that He is everywhere or in everything or to attribute any quality that is Allah's alone to man [Qur'aan 4:48, 6:18 & 61, 10:3, 68 - 69, 20:5, 35:10, 42:11, 72:26 - 27, Ch. 112]
- 3) Setting up intermediaries between oneself and Allah, making supplication to them, asking their intercession, and placing one's trust in them. Calling upon the dead, asking them for help, or offering them gifts or sacrifices is all shirk. [Qur'aan

2:165 & 255, 5:72, 30:52, 39:44]. To give any of the creation that which is due to Allah alone or to be pleased with being given worship besides Allah in any manner [Qur'aan 21:29] thus making or becoming a taaghoot (pl. tawaagheet).

**4)** To curse, abuse the Name of Allah, to deny or to revile Him or any of His Messengers or Prophets or Angels. [Qur'aan 2:285, 4:136, 6:10, 57:19]

**5)** To deny, stop, or reject any Fard (obligatory) duty of the Sharia (Divine Law) i.e. Salaah, Zakaah, Saum, Hajj, Kindness to parents, etc. [Qur'aan 4:50, 64-65, 80] or to turn away from the religion by not learning or practicing it's precepts. [Qur'aan 32:22]

**6)** To deem or to make permissible (halaal) what is clearly forbidden (haraam) -i.e. adultery, fornication, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, theft, murder, sorcery, magic; or to make what is halaal haraam - i.e. to eat meat or seafood, marry plural wives, women to veil, etc. [Qur'aan 2:102, 174-176,4:69, 6:157]

**7)** To deny or reject any chapter, verse, or letter from the Book of Allah (Al-Qur'aan) or to purposely give it deviant interpretations [Qur'aan 3:7, 6:21] i.e. not derived from the Qur'aan itself, the authentic Sunnah of Muhammad (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) [Qur'aan 6:153, 16:64] or according to established methods of tafseer. Abu Hurairah (radiallahu 'anhu) reported that the Rasool (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said, "Don't pursue that which you have no knowledge of". Ahmed. [Qur'aan 4:59, 10:68-70].

**8)** To openly show disdain, scorn, contempt for, or treat with levity the Deen of Islam or it's tenets, obligatory injunctions or it's traditions. [Qur'aan 4:140] To ridicule and deride them or to treat the Qur'aan as a piece of garbage or filth or to trample or abuse it as an insult. [Qur'aan 4:83, 140, 6:4-5, 7:50-51, 9:63-66, 20:124, 41:26 27]

**9)** To disbelieve in the Resurrection, Punishment, or Goodly reward on the Day of Reckoning or that punishment and reward are only abstract, symbolic or spiritual. [Qur'aan , 56:1-2, 67:8-10, 69]

**10)** To say that the Righteous (Awliyaa') are above the Prophets ('alaihimus salaam) or that some of the Righteous are exempt from acts of worship prescribed by Islam according to the Sunnah of Muhammad (sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam). [Qur'aan 3:85, 8:34, 10:62-63]

**11)** To rule or judge by other than that which Allah revealed. This is of different types and the ruling differs depending on the beliefs and actions. Whoever rules by other than what Allah has revealed viewing it or believing it to be superior or better than Allah's sharia is considered a disbeliever by all the Muslims. Likewise, the one who substitutes the sharia with man-made laws and views that as permissible, even if he says that to rule by the sharia is better, is a disbeliever because he has made halaal what Allah has made haraam. If one rules as described following whims or in

opposition to someone (i.e. not viewing it as equal, a substitute or superior as described above) he is considered a major sinner. [2:120, 3:85, 4:115, 5:3, 44, 49, 50, 33:36, 45:18, 58:22]. [explained in detail in Fataawa Ibn Baz, Vol. 1 Rulings on 'Aqeedah, pg. 991]

**12)** To support or aid the polytheists (mushrikoon) against the Muslims. [3:28. 118, 4:51, 5:57]

In general, kufr is of two types:

Kufr akbar (major kufr) and kufr asghar (minor kufr).

So kufr akbar - this necessitates eternity in the Hellfire.

And the (kufr) asghar: Necessitates the fulfilment of the threat (of Hellfire) without eternally abiding in it.

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Kinds of major kufr which put one beyond the pale of Islam

The scholars divided kufr into a number of categories, under which they listed many forms and kinds of shirk. These are as follows:

-1-

**The kufr of denial and rejection (takdheeb).** This kufr may sometimes take the form of disbelief in the heart – which occurs rarely among the kuffaar, as Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said – and sometimes it takes the form of outward or apparent rejection, which means concealing the truth and not submitting to it outwardly, whilst recognizing it and knowing it inwardly, such as the Jews' rejection of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Allaah says of them (interpretation of the meaning):

*"then when there came to them that which they had recognised, they disbelieved in it"* [al-Baqarah 2:89]

He also said (interpretation of the meaning):

*"But verily, a party of them conceal the truth while they know it"*

[al-Baqarah 2:146]

That is because rejection only happens which a person knows the truth and refuses it. Hence Allaah stated that the kuffaar's disbelief in the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was not disbelief in the true sense of the word, because their disbelief was only outward and verbal, and inwardly they recognized the truth.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*"it is not you that they deny, but it is the Verses (the Qur'aan) of Allaah that the Zaalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers) deny"*

[al-An'aam 6:33]

*"And they belied them (those Ayaat) wrongfully and arrogantly, though their ownelves were convinced thereof"*

[al-Naml 27:14]

Similar to this is the kufr of permitting that which is forbidden. Whoever regards as permissible something which he knows that Islam has forbidden has disbelieved in the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and in that which he brought. The same applies to one who forbids something which he knows that Islam has permitted.

-2-

**The kufr of turning away in arrogance (tasdeeq) or simply turning away (I'raad),** such as the kufr of Iblees of whom Allaah said:

*"... except Iblees (Satan), he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers (disobedient to Allaah)"*

[al-Baqarah 2:34 – interpretation of the meaning]

And Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*"They (hypocrites) say: 'We have believed in Allaah and in the Messenger (Muhammad), and we obey,' then a party of them turn away thereafter, such are not believers"*

[al-Noor 24:47]

So Allaah has stated that those who do not act in accordance with faith are not believers, even if they utter the words of faith. The kufr of turning away means that one ignores the truth and does not learn it or act in accordance with it, whether it is the matter of words, actions or beliefs. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*"But those who disbelieve, turn away from that whereof they are warned" [al-Ahqaaf 46:3]*

Whoever turns away verbally from that which the Messenger has brought is like one who says "I will not follow him." The one who turns away by his actions is like one who runs away from hearing the truth which he brought, or puts his fingers in his ears so as not to hear, or who hears it but turns away in his heart and refuses to believe, and who refuses to act upon it. He has disbelieved in the sense of the kufr of turning away.

-3-

**The kufr of hypocrisy (nifaaq).** This takes the form of not believing in the heart and not acting, whilst submitting outwardly in order to show off to people. This is like the kufr of Ibn Salool and the other munaafiqeen (hypocrites) of whom Allaah said (interpretation of the meaning):

*“And of mankind, there are some (hypocrites) who say: ‘We believe in Allaah and the Last Day,’ while in fact they believe not.*

*They (think to) deceive Allaah and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and perceive (it) not!*

*In their hearts is a disease (of doubt and hypocrisy) and Allaah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies.*

*And when it is said to them: ‘Make not mischief on the earth,’ they say: ‘We are only peacemakers.’*

*Verily, they are the ones who make mischief, but they perceive not.*

*And when it is said to them (hypocrites): ‘Believe as the people (followers of Muhammad, Al-Ansaar and Al-Muhajiroon) have believed,’ they say: ‘Shall we believe as the fools have believed?’ Verily, they are the fools, but they know not.*

*And when they meet those who believe, they say: ‘We believe,’ but when they are alone with their Shayaateen (devils – polytheists, hypocrites), they say: ‘Truly, we are with you; verily, we were but mocking.’*

*Allaah mocks at them and gives them increase in their wrong-doing to wander blindly.*

*These are they who have purchased error for guidance, so their commerce was profitless. And they were not guided.*

*Their likeness is as the likeness of one who kindled a fire; then, when it lighted all around him, Allaah took away their light and left them in darkness. (So) they could not see.*

*They are deaf, dumb, and blind, so they return not (to the Right Path).*

*Or like a rainstorm from the sky, wherein is darkness, thunder, and lightning. They thrust their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunderclap for fear of death. But Allaah ever encompasses the disbelievers (i.e. Allaah will gather them all together).*

*The lightning almost snatches away their sight, whenever it flashes for them, they walk therein, and when darkness covers them, they stand still. And if Allaah willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight. Certainly, Allaah has power over all things”*

*[al-Baqarah 2:8-20]*

-4-

**The kufr of doubt (shakk)**, which means hesitating with regard to following the truth and being uncertain as to whether it is true, because what is required is certainty of faith (yaqeen) that what the Messenger brought is truth with no hint of doubt in it. Whoever thinks that what he brought may not be true has disbelieved, in the sense of kufr of doubt, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

*“And he went into his garden while in a state (of pride and disbelief), unjust to himself. He said: ‘I think not that this will ever perish.*

*And I think not the Hour will ever come, and if indeed I am brought back to my Lord, (on the Day of Resurrection), I surely, shall find better than this when I return to Him.’*

*His companion said to him during the talk with him: 'Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you out of dust (i.e. your father Adam), then out of Nutfah (mixed semen drops of male and female discharge), then fashioned you into a man?*

*But as for my part, (I believe) that He is Allaah, my Lord, and none shall I associate as partner with my Lord.'"*

*[al-Kahf 18:35-38]*

From this we may conclude that kufr - which is the opposite of eemaan or faith - may take the form of feelings in the heart, such as hating Allaah or His signs, or His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him); this contradicts love and faith which support the actions of the heart. Kufr may also take the form of spoken words, such as insulting Allaah, or it may be an outward action, such as prostrating to idols, or offering sacrifices to someone other than Allaah. Just as faith takes the form of actions of the heart, words on the tongue and outward physical actions, so too kufr may take the form of actions of the heart, words on the tongue and outward physical actions. We ask Allaah to keep us safe from kufr and its branches, and to increase us in faith and make us guided and cause us to guide others... Ameen.

And Allaah knows best.

See *A'laam al-Sunnah al-Manshoorah*, 177; *Nawaaqid al-Eemaan al-Qawliyyah wa'l-Amaliyyah* by Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez Aal 'Abd al-Lateef, 36-46; *Dawaabit al-Takfeer* by Shaykh 'Abd-Allaah al-Qarani, 183, 196.

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## THE PILLARS OF KUFR

The pillars of Kufr are four, they are,

- Haughtiness and disdainfulness : This prevents the person from submission i.e. yielding.
- Envy (Al Hasad) : This prevents him from accepting the naseehah i.e. the advice and from exerting it.
- Anger (Al Ghadab) : This prevents him from being just.
- Lusts : This prevents him from giving himself to worship.

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If the pillar of false pride and haughtiness is demolished, then submission will become easy for him. If the pillar of envy is demolished, then it becomes easier for him to accept advice and to offer it. If the pillar of anger is demolished, it becomes easy for him to be just and humble. If the pillar of lust is demolished, it becomes easy for him to be patient and ready for worship.

The demolishing of mountains is much more easier than demolishing these four pillars for the one who is afflicted with it, specially if they are entrenched in him and became as a firm attribute, because no action can be upright with the presence of these pillars and no soul can be sanctified and purified having these established in it and whenever the person wants to exert himself to do or to act, these four pillars come and corrupt his work. And all other defects originate from these four and if

these four are established in the heart it will make him see falsehood in the form of the truth and truth in the form of falsehood and good in the form of wrong and wrong in the form of good and it will make this life grow nearer to him and make the hereafter far removed from him.

If you contemplate the Kufr of the nations before, you will see that the Kufr of the nations originated from these four pillars and upon these four pillars the punishment will befall. The intensity of the punishment and its severity will depend upon how these four are entrenched. So whoever opens for himself these four pillars is indeed has opened all the doors of evil, sooner or later and whoever has closed the doors of these then he indeed has closed all the doors of evil because these four prevents submissiveness, sincerity, repentance and longing and turning to Allah, acceptance of the truth, the advice to the Muslims, humbleness to Allah and to his creation. This is what these four pillars can do.

The origin of these four pillars is from man's ignorance concerning his Lord and ignorance concerning himself. Had he known of his Lord qualified with the most perfect and magnificent attributes and had he known himself qualified with all forms of defects, he wouldn't be haughty, angry, envious of others because envy in fact is one form of opposition to Allah because he dislikes the favour and blessing of Allah which he bestowed upon his slave while Allah loves that. Not only that, he likes that it to be rifted from his brother and Allah does not like that. So he is opposing Allah in his pre-decree and what Allah loves and his honour and that is why Iblees (Satan) is enemy because his sin was due to haughtiness, arrogance and envy.

How can these be removed?

These two qualities, knowing Allah and Tawheed, and content with him and pleased with him and turning to him, takes away these two qualities of haughtiness and envy and taking anger away by knowing oneself that the self does not deserve all that so that to be angry for it and to avenge for its all sake. In this case this will prompt it to be contempt once this is taken out. Otherwise then this will be preference for the self over its creator and originator. The greatest thing to repel this defect is to train the self to get angry for Allah's sake and whatever at any time enters the self this type of anger for Allah's sake, there will exit the anger for its self and the opposite is true. As to the lust, its cure, its healing is in the correct knowledge. Yielding to the self's lust deprives it from the correct knowledge and putting it on a diet in that respect puts it on the linkage with the correct knowledge. The more you are open the door for lusts, the more you are trying to deprive the self from the correct knowledge and the more you close it, the more you will be linked to the correct knowledge.

Anger is like the wild animal. If its owner releases it, it starts by eating him up first. Lust is like the fire when the person ignites it it begins by burning him there in first. Al-Kibr, haughtiness, false pride, arrogance is like confronting the king regarding the king's possession and kingdom, if he does not destroy you he will expel you. Envy is like opposing someone who is more powerful and more stronger than you.



*This is based on Imam Ibn Al Qayim's (rahimahAllah) specification of these four pillars of Kufr.*